



C the Circle

WINTER 1980

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Jack Mallette on the cover: "I was sitting on a train platform in southern Italy on a hot day when an obscure local pulled up, the doors opened, and there was this photo. Without even checking my camera settings, I snapped the picture, the train pulled out, and I promptly forgot about it. Once back in the states, I had the roll of film developed and was pleased and surprised with the result. One small note of frustration, though. I can't for the life of me remember what the girl looked like!"

A Note on Style

The variety of approaches to writing and design in this issue reflects the *Circle's* function as a laboratory publication. Although each piece was reviewed by staff members and representatives of the Editorial Board, the appearance of any article, story, poem, drawing, or photograph does not necessarily indicate unanimous critical approval.

The Circle wishes to thank all the students and faculty members whose help made this issue possible.

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The Circle wishes to apologize to Dan Haulman for omitting his name from the poem "Link" in the last issue. The poem is reprinted on page 46.

CONTENTS



page 5

Everything's Turning to Gold by Amy Dawes and Ken Taylor 4

The Circle investigates the Muscle Shoals music scene and finds big things happening in the little town that calls itself the "Hit Recording Capital of the World".



page 16

Mad Dogs

fiction by Robert Boliek, Jr. 12

Citizen vs. Citizen by Beth J. Dees 16

Auburn students have long felt that local government discriminates against them, and recent ordinances have only added to the list of grievances. Are we second class citizens? The Circle examines the Auburn City Council for some answers.

A Modest Proposal by Caroline Nutter 20

As many citizens pointed out, bringing the state liquor store into town will only invent another cause for celebration for those students hell-bent on destroying the Auburn morality. Caroline Nutter proposes a solution.



page 24

Both Sides Now by Marilyn Kitchens and Vickey Williams 25

Some insight into the feelings and philosophies of Auburn's gay community

Local People

fiction by Bruce West 31

Darkness on the Edge of Town : by Isaac Joyner 34

Lee County has the lowest voter registration rate in the state and an alarming rate of infant mortality. Isaac Joyner examines the situation of the hungry and poor.



page 30

An Epiphany in Ireland

fiction by Ellen Jones 40

Keeping the Home Fires Burning: by Robert Boliek, Jr. 43

Some Auburn responses to the energy crisis

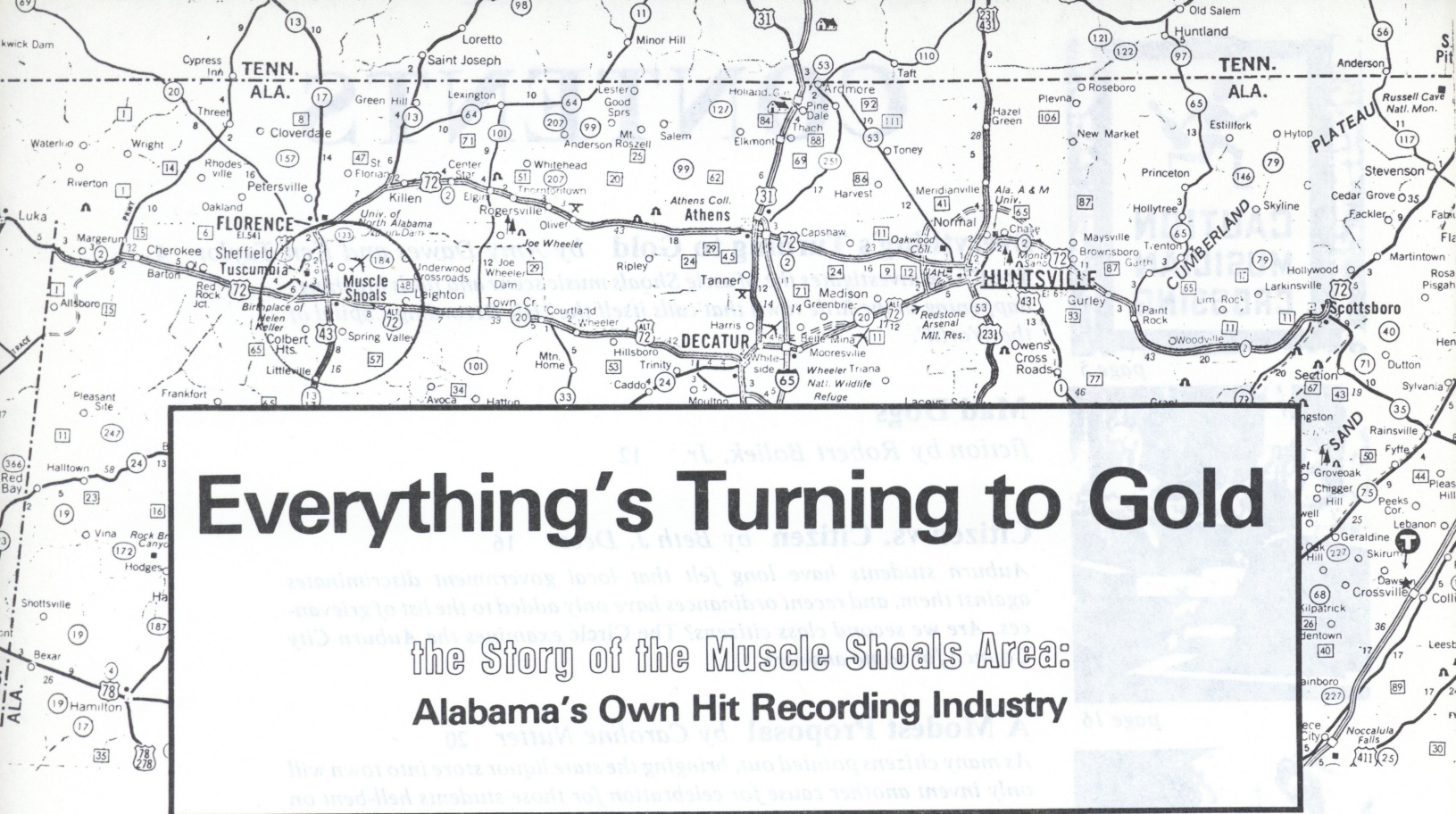
The Rider

fiction by William Dinwiddie 53



page 41

Poetry and artwork throughout the issue



By Amy Dawes
and Ken Taylor

*In Muscle Shoals they got the Swampers
And they been known to pick a tune or two
Lord they get me off so much
They pick me up when I'm feelin' blue*

—Lynyrd Skynyrd, from "Sweet Home Alabama"
© 1974 Duchess Music Co. and Hustlers Inc.

You all singers?" The woman operating the gas station on Highway 43 wants to know when we ask directions to Muscle Shoals. Discovering that we are not, she tells us, "Back two blocks and turn at the light." Then she turns back to her portable television set.

We actually missed it the first time, though we had been watching for miles, back along the cotton-strewn country highway that brought us here from the relative metropolis of Huntsville. Even now, as we enter the town of Muscle Shoals and cruise the Anytown business

strip, we see only Shell stations, McDonalds' outlets, and a K-Mart—no guitar-slingin' singers in cowboy boots, and not even a bar in sight—this is a dry county. Then we pull up to a traffic light and there it is—FAME recording studios, where it all began, nestled snugly in between a Robo's Carwash and a laundromat.

One step through those doors, however, and the lazy attitude of a country Alabama town vanishes into the sharp clean action of a multi-million dollar business. It is the Christmas season, and the greeting cards on the walls come from people all over the world. A sign over the entrance to the two studios boasts, "Through these doors walk the finest musicians, song-writers, artists and producers in the world."

Walt Aldridge, the young jack-of-all-trades around FAME, mentions that he has a girlfriend who goes to Auburn as he bounds up the stairs to his office. Walt's talents range from public relations to studio musician, engineer, songwriter, and producer.

Seated behind his desk in front of a

wall full of listening components, Walt explains what makes musicians like Rod Stewart, Leon Russell, Traffic and Paul Simon decide to cut their albums in this obscure section of northwest Alabama. "People get bored with L.A.," he says. "Sometimes it's nice to get away from it all. For instance, when the Rolling Stones were here to work on the *Sticky Fingers* album, no one even knew who Mick Jagger was. He got kind of depressed . . . it was bad for his ego." (The Stones did not record at FAME, but at the original Muscle Shoals Sound facility, which was then a converted coffin warehouse on Jackson Highway. Local anecdote has it that it was not until the Stones were checking out of their hotel to leave the area that a ten-year-old girl recognized Jagger, and he reciprocated by practically hugging her to death.) "As for this being a dry county," Walt continues, "musicians don't book a studio to party. They come to work, the less distraction the better. The partying comes when it's all over."

How do the studios in Muscle Shoals measure up to those in other places? "People don't pick a studio for the



equipment," Walt says. "Equipment is equipment. Everybody who's in business has it. They come for the studio musicians, and they come for the producers." In fact, it was producer Rick Hall, the founder of FAME studios, who was the kingpin of the whole Muscle Shoals phenomenon.

Rick Hall is best known as a strong-willed man with a genius for putting together rhythm sections and a Midas touch in the studio. His office at FAME is a plush, high-action set-up. Electric guitars rest on stage racks in the corners and there is a bar and an elaborate stereo system built into the walls. The desk is stacked with papers and cassettes that bespeak the nature of the business transactions that occur here. The walls of the room glitter with more gold than King Tut's tomb, and among the records, plaques, and pictures there is a Grammy Award for "Number One Producer of the Year" in 1972 and a nomination for the same award in 1974. But the rewards are not the whole story. Hanging on that same wall is a photograph of Hall's first studio—a tiny walk-up above City Drugstore on Tennessee Street in Florence. Rick Hall didn't find gold in Muscle Shoals—he made it.

In 1957 Hall and partners Tom Stafford and the now-famous Nashville songwriter Billy Sherrill used a borrowed \$300 to start their one-room studio and publishing company. They named the company Florence Alabama Music Enterprises and began cutting demos on the songs they wrote. When they had a good tape, someone would stick it in his back pocket and board a bus for Nashville. Eventually conflicts broke out among the strong-willed trio, and when Sherrill got his break and left for Nashville, he left a bitter and determined Hall sitting in Florence with a publishing company and some ideas of his own.

In 1960 Hall was on his way to a poker game in an old Sheffield hotel when he heard a black bellhop named Arthur Alexander singing a song that sounded like a hit. Hall forgot his poker game, took the bellhop into the renovated honky-tonk he was using for a studio then, and together they cut a song called, "You Better Move On." Nashville was having nothing to do with black music, but the song was released

on the west coast and Hall had his first smash hit. Things really got rolling when Hall's brand of R&B caught the ear of Jerry Wexler, then-President of Atlantic Records, who was recording acts like Wilson Pickett, Clarence Carter, and Aretha Franklin on Stax Records in Memphis. Wexler began sending his acts to Muscle Shoals, and Hall produced a long string of gold hits that included Aretha Franklin's "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man".

Hall has said in an interview with *Cashbox* that at that time, "In the sixties, when black was black and white was white, there was a lot of friction. It was amazing to a lot of record companies that a white boy in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, was cutting hit records on black artists." But there was no sense in trying to compete with Nashville, which was only 100 miles away, and black talent was what Rick Hall saw all around him. The reason he worked so successfully with these acts was that Hall feels they came out of the same culture. "The same culture, right," Hall says, "At the same time, a different color; but my color was an asset to them, because there are a lot of black people in the music business much more talented than I am, but at that time in the early sixties they couldn't work with the white president of a record company as quickly as a white man could. So I was their token white boy that cut records and went in and did a number on the record company for them." (*Cashbox*)

Hall went on to engineer the phenomenal success of the Osmond Brothers, bringing them from their days as a barbershop quartet to their healthy reign as American teen idols with a string of gold records that began with the R&B flavored hit, "One Bad Apple."

Later, it was Hall who resurrected Paul Anka's career with the controversial hit, "Having My Baby," and Hall who kicked off Mac Davis' career with "Baby Don't Get Hooked On Me."

Common to all of these hits, and scores of others, was that famous rhythm combination known as the Muscle Shoals sound. Rick Hall has described the Muscle Shoals sound as "a basic, fundamental, heavy gut-bucket cross between R&B black music and rock and roll. We used a lot of bass drum, a lot of

Photographs by Ken Taylor

bass. Very little influence at all from country."

In order to get that sound, Hall has been notoriously talented at putting together rhythm sections, but not so lucky with maintaining his control over them. His first rhythm section split for Nashville shortly after those first R&B successes. (The bass player for that group, Norbet Putnam, has gone on to produce for Jimmy Buffett, and the piano player, has played with Elvis Presley, George Harrison and Neil Young.)

Hall's second and best-known rhythm section consisted of four extremely talented studio musicians: guitar player Jimmy Johnson, bass player David Hood, drummer Roger Hawkins, and keyboardist Barry Beckett, who split from Hall and started their own studio, Muscle Shoals Sound, shortly after 12

on. "You know, gold records really play," Walt mentions as we leave Hall's office and head for the studio.

Down in studio A, things are just what they are cracked up to be—slow, painstaking, and potentially boring. Walt is recording the last two tracks for a demo tape, the piano section and the guitar solo, on a 16-track console that bears enough switches and read-outs, blinkers and hooters, toggles and dials to operate a subway train station. Walt smoothed his fingers over the panel as easily as if he were tuning a television, gradually fading in instruments he had already tracked until the room pulsed with carefully engineered sound. The sound came from a bank of black speakers atop a pane of glass that looked out into the carpeted studio, where musicians normally operate, but session player Jimmy English sat right



million copies worth of success with Percy Sledge's "When A Man Loves A Woman." Walt admits that MSS is currently the area's most successful operation, though FAME has plenty going

beside Walt at the console while they tried for just the right effect in laying down a guitar solo. Their conversation was as follows:

W: Let's try it one more time.

J: Okay

(plays)

J: You want it melodic . . . it's too melodic.

W: I like melodic . . . take it a rock way . . . not too bluesy though.

J: Okay (plays)

W: Lay off the 64th notes.

J: Just sing what you hear.

W: I don't hear anything—not any particular line . . . Just play what you feel.

J: Okay (plays)

W: Sounds sorta Mexican.

J: You hear that buzzsound?

W: Hit that bright switch.

J: Okay. (strums a chord)

W: I hear a dirty sound.

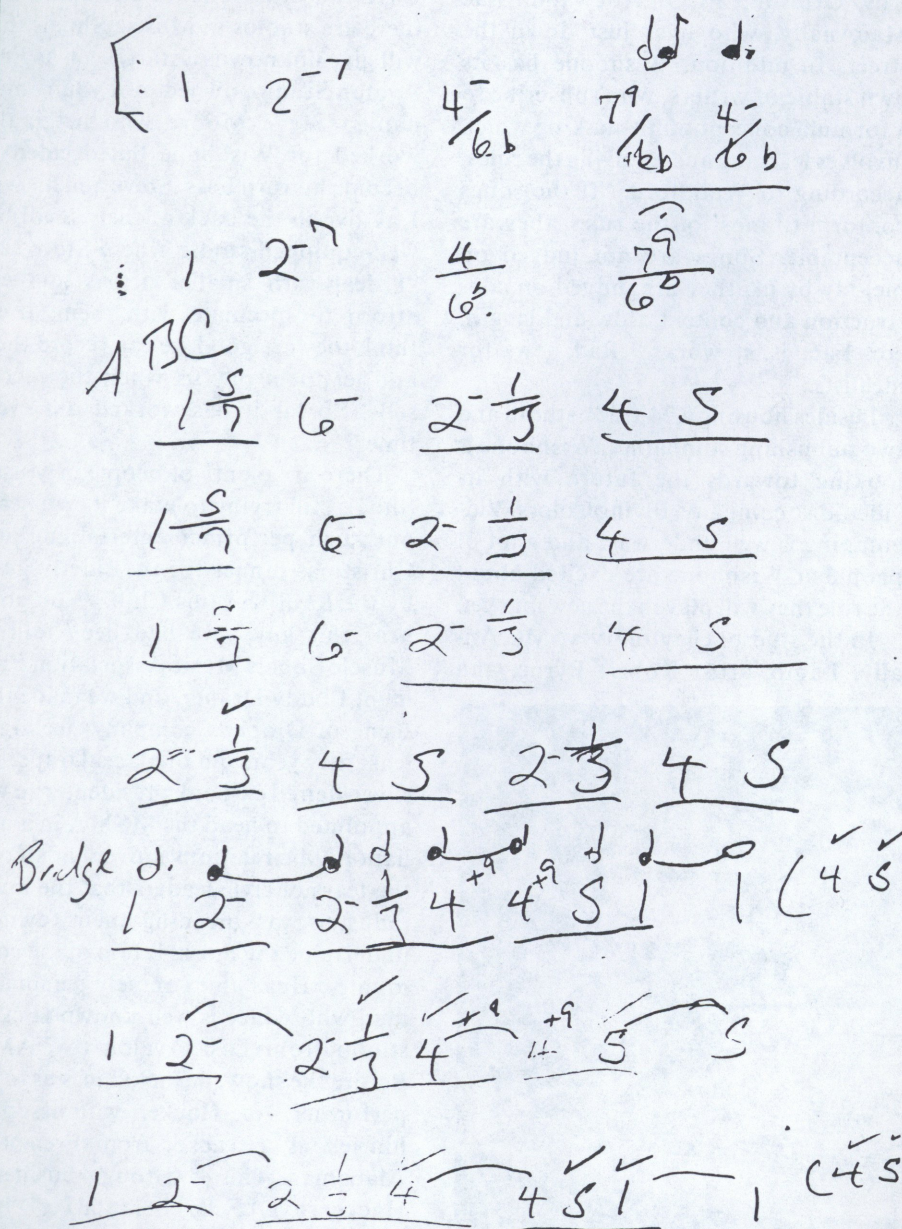
J: Let me get my distortion box . . .

Lee Curtis, an Englishman and a new talent on Fame's roster who has just completed his first album, wanders into the session to make a few comments. We get invited to a promotion party in his honor the next day. The session is stopped when Walt's lunch is brought in by a musician. It was four o'clock at the time. The dinner had mixed all together in its cardboard box. "What is this?" Walt said. "Five bucks, Walt," the musician smiled.

Dylan would wander down by the river sometimes when he was here," said Elaine, the secretary, indicating the muddy Tennessee where it flows past the front doors of Muscle Shoals Sound Studios. The morning sun was sparkling on the water when we arrived, and the place was empty except for Elaine, another secretary and a delivery man who came in lugging a side of pork. Elaine was still blow drying her hair at her desk when we came in. "It's always like this in the morning," she said, releasing an electronic security lock for the deliveryman. "The (producers, musicians) don't start working until after noon because sessions often last until daylight."

The MSS studio is a two-year-old state-of-the-art facility housed under the huge (36,00 square feet) ceiling of a renovated Naval Reserve Building. It is owned and operated by the rhythm section consisting of Wood, Hawkins, Johnson and Beckett that split from Rick

LOVE COMES AND GOES



Musician's notes from a Wishbone session

Hall in 1969 and entered into fierce competition with FAME studios, eventually coming out ahead. It was here that Bob Dylan recorded his "Slow Train Coming" album, which critics have hailed as his best ever musically, and he already has a booking for a return visit in February.

The interior here is New York-chic

and the walls are covered in gold and platinum that bears names like Cat Stevens, Traffic, Bob Seger, Rod Stewart, the Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, and a few dozen others, including many 60's R&B hits. Included under this roof are four recording studios, two of them still incomplete, a kitchen with an adjacent dining room, a recreation room

with pool, pinball, and bumper pool, a huge lounge with a long bar, couches and chairs, a video cassette player and some empty bookshelves. There is also a hallway flanked on both sides by the offices of the songwriters, photographers, engineers, the publishing company, and the offices of the big four. At the end of the hallway is a huge photo of Jerry Wexler.

"Dylan is such a strange little man," Elaine is saying by way of comment on Dylan's stay as we stand in reverence before the \$160,000 Neve console in Studio A. "He didn't trust anybody. We let him wander the halls, and when he understood nobody was going to attack him, he relaxed. Even the Washington Post was trying to get at him when he was here, and one girl flew all the way down from New Jersey, claiming she was an old friend of his. He took one look at her and said he'd never seen her before in his life."

The studios here are lush, large and impressive, and the Neve console, a German import, is one of the few boards in the country that is computerized.

The instrument logs precisely what the engineer wants on his tracks, and has the capacity to store the sound for later reference. Each of the studios has three isolation booths, one for drumming and two for vocals, with different colored lighting for creating special moods to work in. The studios rent for \$160 per hour, an average price for the area. "The rhythm section is the main reason people choose to record here," Elaine says. "Quality is the main thing. They're interested in getting the feel and the sound that they want. Recording is work, hours and hours of work. The biggest drawback here is comfort. It's funny—they don't know what to expect till they get here. When they call up to arrange for a place to stay they'll say, 'Do you have a Sheraton or a Hilton?' . . . and I say, 'How about a Holiday Inn?'"

The first and only four-year college curriculum for a degree in commercial music is available at the University of North Alabama in Florence. The course teaches its students about writing, producing, and making it in the record

industry, as well as how to avoid being taken advantage of by slick executives. Its creator and teacher, Terry Woodford, is one-half of the partnership that founded Wishbone, Inc., the third of Muscle Shoals' three largest recording studios. (There are nine in the area altogether.)

Wishbone sits off by itself under a stand of Alabama scrub pine, bordered by tennis courts and a row of luxury log cabins for the recording artists, and surrounded by an atmosphere all its own. Woodford and his partner Clayton Ivey (a master keyboard man who has played on around 90 million-selling albums) seem to have instilled their staff with a strong belief in what they are setting out to achieve. Being around Wishbone is like being with a happy family hard at work together. Everyone there, from Amanda Allen, the publicity assistant, to Kevin Lamb, the studio manager, said that they believed in "the Wishbone concept," something Woodford describes as "taking care of our artists,

dance during stage shows.

Some of the artists Wishbone works with are Hank Williams, Jr., The Commodores, Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross, Roy Orbison, FCC, Hot, and Mac MacAnally, who lives just down the street. In addition, Wishbone has its own stable of writers, who subscribe to a formula concept of hit-making which involves learning and applying the rules, according to Woodford. "If the songs conform to most of the rules, they are acceptable. Songs are not judged on melody by us; they are judged on construction and content, flow and length, etc. Fact is, it works." Bad news for idealists.

Besides housing a 24-track studio and two publishing companies, Wishbone is looking towards the future with its video-disc company, Flying Colors. Videotaping is well underway, and a lot of people at Wishbone are excited about the role they will play in the new market.

In the studio, Clayton Ivey, MacAnally, Lamb, artist Robert Byrne, and

motionless as a mountain in his trucker's cap and black Fidel Castro beard. Only his foot taps in response to the drum-bashing beat. The man is into the music.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are studios in Muscle Shoals that will give unknowns a start, such as East Avalon Studio, owned by a young man named Steve Moore who originally worked for Wishbone but decided to become his own boss. Steve and his wife Kay live in the back of their small but well-equipped studio where Steve says "I deal with smaller artists and can afford to speculate with them. If we think they are good we can record them and let them pay us when the record sells. So far it has worked out every time."

There are plenty of people in Muscle Shoals still trying to make it. We heard one such performer entertaining at a Christmas dinner for the elderly given by the local Kiwanis Club. "You gotta hear this guy," we had been told by Muscle Shoals Music Association President Buddy Draper, and we made that scene in Draper's company, feeling at least fifty years out of place. Draper is a silver-haired ex-bank president who was appointed to head the MSMA in a brilliant public relations move that allayed the fears of civic leaders that the music industry was invading their town to undermine the moral fabric of the community. He is an extremely personable man whose face is well-known at every studio from East Avalon to FAME. Before the show, he introduces us to the performer, Ace Hacker, who describes himself as a trucker from Freighton, Alabama. "This is a tough business," Hacker says, "Fella could starve." "He's good, isn't he," Draper says over a plateful of chopped turkey and strained squash while Hacker interprets Elvis Presley and Kenny Rogers for appreciative octogenarians. After the show, Hacker pulls away in a new Lincoln Continental. "I thought he was a trucker," I object. "Owns the trucking line," supplies Draper, and we hop into his old blue Ford and streak across the back roads to make it to FAME in time for the promotion party.



offering them a little more." This is accomplished by operating as an independent production company with its own press people to insure that Wishbone artists get plenty of press coverage and airplay. They also provide services such as connecting their artists with managers and music attorneys, and Kevin Lamb says they have gone so far as to teach their bands how to move and

several other people are listening to the playback of a cut on FCC's new album. The music booms out of the speakers at a deafening sound level, but people still manage to talk idly with each other and wander around. All except Ivey, who sits at the console in total absorption with the drummer for FCC slumped in a chair beside him like a schoolboy awaiting his exam grade. Ivey sits as big and

Derek Bowman is getting worried. The party FAME is giving started two hours ago and his client, Lee Curtis, still has not arrived. The two dozen radio, TV, and newspapermen in the room are getting restless. The engineers, producers, and sessionmen are getting drunk. "We're having a wine party at two in the afternoon," a musician had told me yesterday in mock excitement. "That's really big for around here."

Bowman walks up wiping his brow. He is a big man, an Oxford graduate and an ex-Fleet Street journalist who has since turned to managing musicians like David Essex and Lee Curtis. "I just rang up Lee," he says. "I said, 'What are you doing?' He said, 'I can't find me slippers!' I don't know what's the matter with him. His head's in the clouds!"

When Lee finally shows up half an hour later, he is sporting dazzling new black and white tennis shoes. I think of the K-Mart between FAME and the Holiday Inn . . .

The new album is being played from an engineering booth. It includes a rocking cover of the Robert Palmer song, "You're Gonna Get What's Coming." "I'm thinking of calling it 'Hot and Mellow,'" Curtis says of the album, "but I don't know . . . that's a bit vague." He wants to know how to get on the college concert circuit, so that he can get a feel for American audiences. Curtis is an ex-architect who worked in a civil service office (where he said "one meets the most boring people in the world") before he was "discovered" singing in a London pub by Bowman and signed to a recording contract in the States. Asked how it feels to be a Londoner in this backwoods country of W. C. Handy and Hank Williams, where Lynyrd Skynyrd once spent a whole year crowded three to a room in the Blues Truck Stop Motel. Curtis says he feels very lucky to be working with the people at FAME. Then he is hustled away by a man from the *Huntsville Times* and conversation turns to the economic crunch being felt in the music business. Record buying is below expectations; production methods are being scaled down and simplified to cut costs. And while Muscle Shoals has traditionally operated in the pop music spectrum and left the country to Nash-

ville, the word is out that the times are changing. In fact, Loretta Lynn is due in town soon, and Nashville can expect some considerable competition from this capsulized recording industry that turns out more hits per number of recording sessions than Nashville, New

York, or L.A., and has consequently dubbed itself "The Hit Recording Capital of the World." "Yes sir," Buddy Draper chuckles a shade gleefully, "I heard it just the other day: Rick Hall is putting his cowboy hat on."



Horses of Night

When the wind whips down
From the mountain's height,
And the moon's glow dims,
And the stars are bright,
Then a sound is heard
With the wind's chill cry
Of a thousand hooves
In the frozen sky.
With the wind they come
Through the darkness cold
From their homes above
In the North so old.
Running on the breath
Of the winter gale,
In the night they play,
Racing through the dale.
As they run, they nip
With their sable jaws
And the trees they twirl,
For they know no laws,
Save those of the wind
As it blows o'erhead
And chases the clouds
To their fleecy bed.
With their midnight manes
Flung to stars on high;
As the frosty spumes
Of their breath do fly;
Then a sparkle comes
To their eyes so deep
As they dance through a world
Shrouded soft in sleep.
Satin-black beauties
Of the realm of night.
Creatures of the dark
And the chill starlight.

—Catherine DeMott



**A Spontaneous Responding Sermon Towards NucPower, The Draft, War,
And The Paranoia Of Men In Snake Ties And Dark Suits**

I know where the truth lies Ask me
I know enough scorpion pits and locust fields and ways to hang myself
By a gas mask to kill a million lifetimes
Rat ghosts from a war movie crawl into my bullet-hole eyes almost
Every night haunting me till I bleed
I don't want to move away all-of-a-sudden-surreal-like into a noodle
Of blood or boxed ash
I dig living at the moment even if I haven't bought any new socks
In the last four years
I dig having mystic fits three in the morning and walking down the
Street talking to myself

I dig people dream of them all the time Yes even the ones in Motor car co.(s)
 When everytime I see a tie dangling in the middle of a trunk-fitted
 Suit I feel like I've been poisoned
 I dig the real Christ the one bleeding for two thousand years through
 The pages of His red words
 Still bleeding because America doesn't understand Walt Whitman or
 Matthew 5:9, 21, & 44
 I even dig a little the one flag-poled behind the cannon pulpit with
 Lead dripping out of his rheumatic ear
 And Even the one twirling his tongue in a bowl of buffalo nickels
 Like he's licking a tootsie-pop
 I dig better people like Boehme, St. Francis, Jose Rizal, T. Merton,
 Holy Whitman and Wildman Bly Guru-Priest-Anybody
 I dig putting my arm around a friend and saying I love you I'm not
 Macho at all
 I dig all night woman's hair and wine and wine falling all over me
 And in my mouth crazy
 I dig diving into a poem just like what you're thinking
 I dig the way I write even if it doesn't rhyme or
 Meter or get an A or your sweet kiss
 I dig letting my freaky part fly and my other freaky part fly...
 I have no use for unity only love and dream and love and dream...
 I'm not one person at all I'm a thousand!
 I dig loving my enemies like digging strange women into loving me
 I've been turning my cheek the other way for nearly two hundred
 Years now
 I still love them in the Library and the employment office even if
 They did stick it to me and every other poor sucker I don't know
 I even dig you Fawcett-head and perma-press frat come see me I'll
 Show you the way into your mind
 I even dig the president who should get up right now and leap into
 The Beatitudes before listening to Beethoven's Fifth
 I even dig you Big wallet man and bongo-ass politician with your
 Lousy billion dollar napalm dreams
 I dig you intellects with your wormy inventions crawling out of your
 Sunset-mouths onto the volcano desks of corporations
 I'll still dig you when you lose your bloody minds blowing yourself
 Up over a cup of tea and black push buttons
 I'll dig you forever though you wouldn't listen Ah! It makes me want
 To cry!
 I'll dig you even more if you don't take the sun and moon with you
 (Don't worry about the stars you'll be our stars)
 I'll dig you intimately if you don't hoist up my friends or all the
 Sweet women or me with you
 Can't You See?
 I still want to lay at the womb of a woman I know for a hundred years
 I still have messages to write down here (though I'll miss you you've
 Given me so much to write about)
 I still dig being a kid at night with a face full of bright doves
 I still dig sitting like a holy man in the morning waiting for my
 Daily moment of resurrection Ah Yes My Soul My Poem My ETERNITY!
 Get it I dig dig dig being mad with the sanctity of Life!

—Ross Brinker, J. Stills, and D.G.

Mad Dogs

fiction by Robert Boliek, Jr.

It was long ago, but he would not forget, not even the small things like the porch swing, and how he would rock back and forth, watching his shadow grow and deepen and then disappear as the cars passed by, bright headlights coming, red taillights going. Or how all the old people after church would talk, the men talking among themselves, the women laughing in little groups, their hair shining like spun silver in the noon sun. All holding glasses of tea, sweaty and



Lithograph by Kathy Fluker

cool, and tinkling as the old people lifted them to drink. The sun was often bright, riding the high blue sky like a proud man on a proud horse; the grass was green, and the earth in the gardens was soft and red. The house was of wood and rock and was very dark inside, except for the kitchen, where the sun poured in through the many windows and was reflected in the chrome of the sink and the stove and the glass of the cupboard. There was pasture too, and cattle, and water flowing beneath tall old trees. And there were dogs. He would not forget the dogs.

There were dozens, and his grandfather loved them all. He used to watch the old man walk through the dogpen, a tall, gaunt canine god in overalls basking in the leaping, yelping homage he received there. Some men have always found within themselves strange workings of the spirit when it comes to dogs; his grandfather was such a man, and his feelings of kinship to the animals ran deep.

Never was the old man's devotion more in evidence than when hunting was in season. Man and dog were united in the pursuit of rabbit, and the boy had seen many dead ones skinned on the nail in the side of the tool shed. He had always wanted a knife like the one his grandfather used on the rabbits. One very sharp, very shiny. To keep the knife that way, the man would slowly pass it back and forth over a stone. A little oil helped.

It always struck the boy as strange that a love of dogs did not run in the family. He spent much of his spare time in the orchard, far enough away from the animals that he could almost forget them. Only an occasional yelp ever reached him there. Even as a small child he had often taken refuge among the orchard's even rows. Back then, he had been a shaper of clay. He had made all the animals: cows, pigs, horses; but usually he made dogs. Ferocious little clay dogs. Mad dogs. Usually they had to be killed.

Now he was a climber of trees, and even though the fragile trees in the orchard were no challenge for him, he still sought it out above all other places. For there he had a world of his own, untouched by the old people and their stifling habits. There were no walls or roofs there, only the trees and the limitless sky. Furthermore, there were no dogs.

The boy simply could not remember when he and the dogs did not hate one another. Even when he sounded the depths of memory and saw the world collapse into a snatch of clover or a gold watch hanging from a heavy chain, he felt an accompanying hatred for those tight bundles of leaping fur which his grandfather loved so much, a hatred which he believed, even as a small boy, extended backwards to the day of his birth. He kept such thoughts from his grandfather, of course. The very edges and limits of the old man's world were dogs and dead rabbits.

The boy's hatred for the animals was matched only by his

intense fascination with them. He could watch them for hours, the way snakehaters are drawn to the reptile houses at zoos, almost loving the repulsion they feel for the lurking scaly things behind the glass. Standing safely away from their pen or out of their sight completely, he would watch as his grandfather fed the dogs the specially mixed food the old man had prepared himself because he did not completely trust the dog food companies. Not with his dogs. They got his own special recipe mixed in the back of the small store he owned. The boy had watched him make it countless times in the harsh light of the bare bulb behind the meat counter, near where he hid his glass and whiskey from his wife. Meal scraps, bread, dry and wet dog food of all brands—one or two of them had to be good—went into the large iron pan his grandfather kept for the purpose. The buttermilk was always the last ingredient, the crowning touch that made the meal complete. The boy would never forget the care those deft and gnarled old hands took to work the contents into an homogenous stew, or the old man's strange joy as he distributed it as equally as he could among the greedy dozens, bolting and leaping about, with their frenzied rolling eyes, animal breath, and wet-gummed leers.

With care, the boy managed to keep his secret war from the old man. His grandmother, on the other hand, caught him teasing the dogs once. She saw him run up and kick the chicken wire of the dogpen, which gave in enough to allow him to strike the dogs, not too hard really, with his foot, the way someone standing close to the canvas wall of a tent could be tapped on the shoulder from outside. He had never seen the old woman so angry or so puzzled. Didn't he know dogs never forget? she was saying as she struck him with the barber's strap, the kind used to sharpen straight razors with. Didn't he know what Grandpa would do to him if he found out? she said, her face ballooning before him, tense and dark against the sky. He could hear the dogs behind him, growling and sniveling, and probably staring and waiting, biding their time, waiting for him. He broke the old woman's grasp and ran like mad to the trees in the orchard and hid a long while in the shadows there.

The year soon turned to shorter days, and all the leaves went to color. Dusk came quicker and lingered longer; smoke began to ease up and around from out the chimneys, dark grey against the clear sky. He could find little cover in the orchard, nearly naked now, and watched in anguish as the bright sun grew distant and cold. His grandfather sharpened all the knives one grey Tuesday, smiling the whole while he performed the ritual. The next week he cleaned guns and resurrected boots.

And one day, while he was sitting quietly in his room, he overheard his grandparents talking as they ate.

"Where's the boy?"

"He's already eaten, Tom. I guess he's out playing somewhere."

"I'm thinking of taking him hunting when the season opens next week."

"Don't you think he's a little young?"

"Hell no, Margaret. He's old enough. I couldn't wait when

I was his age. Tell him I want to talk to him this afternoon."

It was a long, anxious week for the boy, and he walked often among the tall oaks beside the brook. The very idea that he was going hunting frightened and disgusted him. For all he knew, the dogs would turn on him. God knows they hated him enough, always had, and what's more, they never forgot.

He could hardly bear to look at the orchard. Compared to the stately oaks near the brook, the trees there were barren and spindly, devoid of all beauty. He had seen cold weather come to the orchard many times before, but it had never affected him like this. Gazing out over the carefully planted rows, he felt detached, homeless, and lonely. This was no longer his place, but a strange and alien landscape inhospitable to all his desires.

Something simply had to be done.

The boxes were where they should have been, skull and crossbones prominent. A country store like this had a little bit of everything, from well pumps to rat poisoning. His grandfather was out counting cows; his grandmother was shopping in town. He was sure he would have time to do what had to be done, though it had to be done today. Tomorrow he was to go hunting. It would be now or never, he knew as he crept over the oil-soaked wood floors towards the meat counter; it's me or them, he thought.

When the boy walked out to the store that evening at feeding time, his grandfather was already there. He had just drained his big whiskey glass and put it down on the chopping block.

"For my cold," he said and laughed.

He then began to make the dogs' meal, following his careful routine. The boy watched more closely than ever the thoughtful motions of his grandfather's hands and was especially pleased when the old man was even more generous than usual with the buttermilk.

"Grandpa, can I feed the dogs today?" the boy asked as the old man finished kneading the ingredients.

"Why sure. Glad to see you're showing some interest. It's gonna be a great day tomorrow. Be fair with the portions, now."

The boy took his time with the dogs. They did not react unusually to the food, just the same old slobbering and yelping. He fed them through the fence slowly, carefully, for over a quarter of an hour perhaps. He wondered how long it would take, how powerful it was. He could not answer for sure, but he knew it eventually would work. He watched the dogs awhile as they stupidly ate their way to death and felt marvelous.

By the time he returned to the store, his grandfather had already left. He opened the meat freezer and put the pan in its place. He poured the bad buttermilk down the drain and was reaching up to flip off the light switch when he saw it sitting where it always sat, partially hidden from sight on a shelf beneath the chopping block. It was his grandfather's whiskey glass, tall and snug as ever against the Very Old Barton, this time left unwashed, and rimmed all about with a residue of buttermilk.





Drawing by Stephen Stowe

In Milledgeville, In Rain

The state crazy house is here.
As a kid they told me
I would wind up under lock and key
if I didn't quit telling lies,
but at thirty
I am finding it for the first time in my life.

I came down old 16
past dry corn and fields
of tumor-like melons.
Miles out of my way to Alabama.
I just had to see where Miss O'Connor
suffered with lupus, found Jesus
crucified on barbed wire
and sunflowers. It's no mistake;
you have to go through Sparta to get here.
You must also go through Jewell.

The mad sabbath traffic shoots by.
A diamondback dead in the road.

Ask about Faulkner in Oxford
and get ready for trouble, but
here they don't know who Flannery was.
Not a Catholic for miles
in Georgia's ante bellum capital.
A transfer truck with GRACE
painted on the side
thunders by, going north.

No camp meeting or moonlight submersion,
just crepe myrtles blossoming purple,
the silver ballistics of rain falling
from a falling sun.

Her house is impossible to find.
I don't know where I am
so I ask.
The hoochie hula girl tattoo
on the Gulf station mechanic's arm oozes blood.
I am close to the house for the insane.

I walk the streets in rain,
find no Golgotha or Gilead.
In lieu of the peacock's arrogant tail
the only eyes I get
are agated oilspots on asphalt
and half a moon.



Next time I'll stay on the Interstate
doing sixty
past the stadium
and the new Capitol's golden dome,
getting home by dark.

I should be behind bars for hoping
I could find a visible saint.
A sign says the Lions welcome me.
STAR WARS shines on the movie marquee.
Crabapples rot on the limbs.

Moving out.
Climbing kudzu makes monsters of the trees.
Some people drive like they're drunk
on purple Jesus.
A good land is hard to find,
but I am crazy about the world,
and I am at large.
The rain is sharp as nails.
All that falls must converge
and we will have flood by morning.

—R.T. Smith

Photograph by Rob Lotufo

I think it's time this city started taking a look at being cooperative," said young councilman Denson Lipscomb on February 19 as the Auburn City Council prepared to vote on the controversial "roadblock" ordinance that prohibits student organizations from soliciting charity funds at intersections. "This ordinance, and the dog and bike ordinances are largely the result of one or two incidences being blown out of proportion."

Denson then presented the Council with a compromise ordinance drawn up with the aid of students and the city attorney that made many provisions for guading against safety hazards while fund raising.

Safety hazards and the complaints of local citizens had been the council's reasons for the ordinance prohibiting "roadblocks." However, no citizens showed up at the council meeting to protest the roadblocks, while the compromise reflected a great deal of concern and hard work on the part of students who opposed the ordinance. The 65 students present in the council chambers held their breath when Lipscomb finished reading the ordinance. It died quickly for lack of a seconding motion, and before the groans of disbelief could die out, the original roadblock ordinance received its second reading and was passed-6-1. Lipscomb cast the only abstaining vote.

Beth Yost, one of the leaders of the student lobby against the ordinance, commented afterward, "It's pretty sad that they won't even consider a compromise." SGA President Ron Taylor called the Council's action "very discouraging" and said that "they just don't listen. Sure, they sit there patiently, but it goes in one ear and out the other." Many students felt that the "roadblock" ban is just another brick in the wall of discrimination built by the Council against the students.

At the base of student dissatisfaction with the Council is the issue of city elections, which are held between spring and summer quarters, when only a handful of students and faculty are

Citizen Vs. Citizen

Students Battle for a Voice in City Government as the List of Grievances Grows

By Beth J. Dees



around to vote.

Many feel the Council's purpose is to represent the interests of the 19,000 students and faculty, as well as the 17,000 non-student city residents, and that holding elections at a time when a majority of the population is gone yields undemocratic results.

In the 1980 census, Auburn students will be included as "full-time" residents, thereby increasing revenue-sharing and other government benefits to the city. In spite of this, the city has no plans for making participation in city government more feasible for the student.

Another major point of contention between City Council and students developed on September 18, 1979, when the Council approved Ordinance No. 988 which prohibits riding bicycles on the sidewalks in the downtown business district and requires placing them in city-supplied racks while the owner shops.

This angered and inconvenienced many bike-riding students who conduct much of their day-to-day business downtown. An estimated 2,400 students have registered bikes, reasoning that their method of transportation saves gas and is a less of a hassle than driving an automobile on Auburn's narrow, crowded streets.

A more subtle issue involving students is the zoning regulation that prevents students, who actually compose a majority of the city residents from living in a large part of the city's residential areas.

Speaking in defense of the Council, Council President Bill Allen denies the idea of any prejudice against the student.

"I know the word comes through that the nasty old city government is trying to discriminate against the student, but we're not," he said. "This city government has a job to do, protecting the students, residents. . . everybody, whether it involves bike ordinances, police matters, fire protection or what. It isn't a question of discrimination, but just trying the best way we know how to do a job." Most students, however, acknowledge a two-sided situation between the City Council and the students.

Five interviewed members of the Council charged that students are apathetic

about local politics anyway. Plainsman Editor Rick Harmon and SGA President Ron Taylor agreed this was true to some extent.

Allen sympathized with the student's apathetic attitude, even defending it. "I don't see why there wouldn't be apathy," he said, "I don't see why a student from somewhere else, who is only going to be here four years anyway, would be tremendously interested in Auburn government."

Kurt Furst, SGA director of student lobby, called the term "a bunch of hogwash".

Thirty students volunteered to help with a petition favoring the election

"They ask for opinions." Another pause. "Some are really sincere, but they represent two different factions and they have a tough job. In the meetings if I feel strongly about something, I say it, but I don't say things unless they've been researched and backed up with facts. To get their respect means to show you deserve it."

Armrester stood confidently at the February 5th meeting to express the student's disapproval of the existing ban on charity roadblocks. He immediately pointed out the student interest displayed by the numbers present (there were 90 students at that meeting), and went on to remind them of personal

Allen: "I know the word comes through that the nasty old city government is trying to discriminate against the student, but we're not."

date change to a time when the students will be in school," he said firmly, "And within a few weeks over 1,500 names have been collected, and we're not through yet."

David Armrester, Student Liaison to the City Council, said he regrets the alleged inattentiveness of the student to local politics but he doesn't like the term "apathy" either. Instead, he explained it as "indifference resulting from students being wrapped up in their own worlds, with not enough time to get involved," adding, "we're going to school, going to work and just aren't as informed as we should be."

Armrester's sincere interest and willingness to attend the Council meetings consistently has earned him the praise of several City Council members.

Armrester personally conducts random telephone surveys, keeps in touch with SGA opinion, and talks with friends to find out what the students think.

Asked if the Council pays attention to what he says in the meetings, he paused.

visits he made with them to discuss the issues and the information that he and Beth Yost, SGA assistant treasurer, had gathered in response to their earlier questions about the roadblock. Included in the information was the compromise ordinance that was quickly dismissed at the following meeting.

Another student issue Armrester took a stand on was the bike ordinance, which reads as follows:

"An ordinance prohibiting the riding or parking of bicycles on sidewalks in the downtown business area of the City of Auburn, providing for penalties for the violation of this ordinance."

Section 2

"Now I got fired-up about that," he said, "because it didn't go into effect until November 1, 1979, and the police began enforcing the ordinance before then. Several bikes were bent-up after being thrown into the trunks of police cars."

"But the City apologized," he said,

although they didn't pay for any of the repairs to the damaged bikes that he knew of.

Tom Bronkema, UPC coordinator, was another student fired-up about the bike ordinance. He directed his feelings into organizing a petition drive. Over 2,250 signatures have been gathered by his committee, including the names of 20 downtown merchants asking for the repeal of the ordinance.

Bronkema considers the law, which carries a maximum \$100 fine for violation, to be "a slap in the face of students." He said, "It represents prejudice against students in a town that is supported by students."

An informal study done by Institutional Analysis of Auburn University confirms the latter part of Bronkema's statement that the students and faculty of Auburn are indeed a significant economic force in the community.

The study reads: "Seventy-five per cent of the University's annual budget of \$120 million remains in the community. A modest assumption of the local multiplier effects suggests that the budget generates an additional \$54 million in the area business activity. Overall, it would be safe to say that, while Auburn and Opelika would exist in the absence of Auburn University, the difference caused by such a lack would be staggering."

Bronkema also complained, after riding around town and looking, that he only found a couple of bike racks for the students to place their bikes in.

Many students have complained that the bike racks are downright hard to find.

Thirteen bike racks have been placed in strategic places throughout the downtown area, according to City Engineer Don Jehle. Councilmen explain the racks were designed to be as inconspicuous as possible, in keeping with plans to make "the loveliest town on the plains" lovelier. The black metal bars of the racks extend about one foot from the boxed flower gardens to which most of them are attached.

Sitting in his office in Funchess Hall, where he teaches Wildlife Management, Councilman James E. Kenamer spoke

quite openly and almost angrily about the student's complaints over the bike racks.

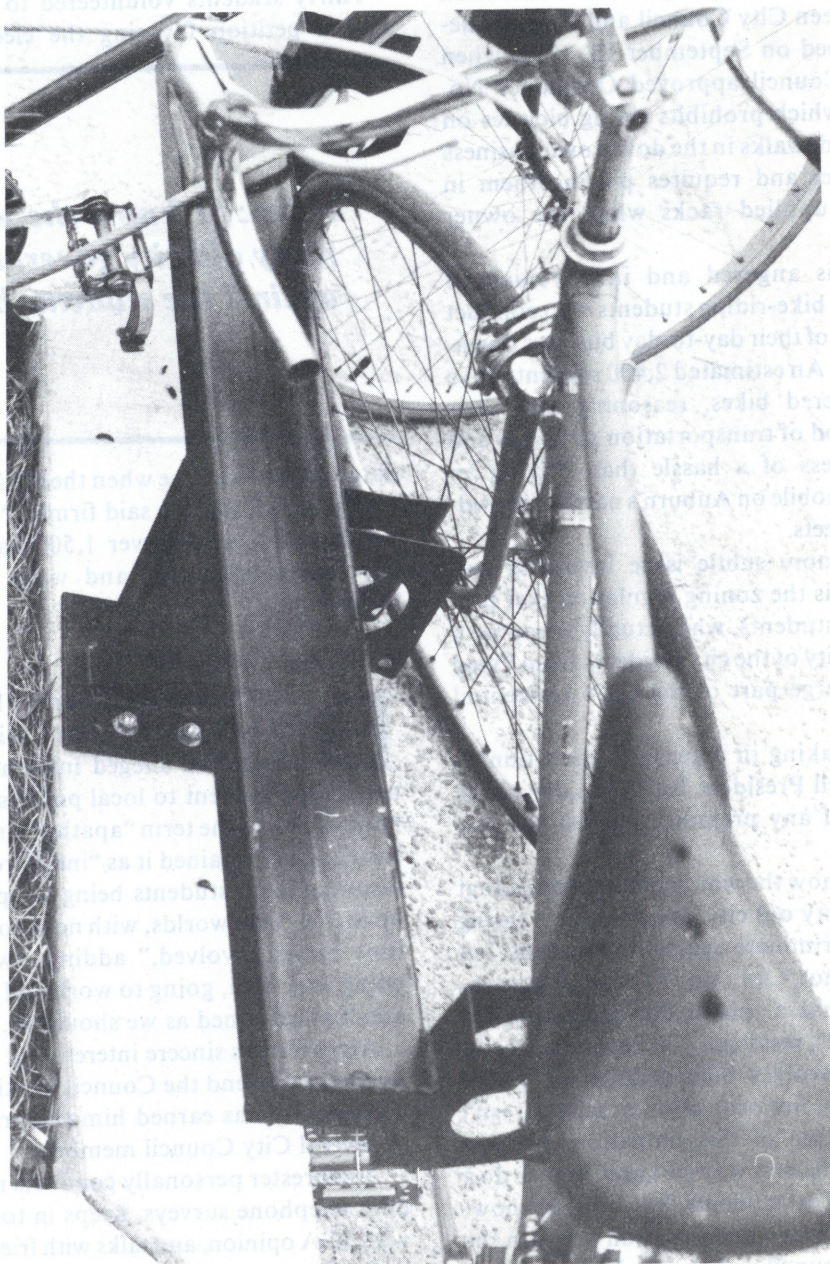
"We're in a design problem," he said, "This is a new thing for us. We tried to find out everything we could on bike racks and we spent hours with the city engineer working on it. Planning whether to put a bunch of racks here, or there, or whether to put one on this corner or that one . . . but we're not allowed a mistake.

"We just spent \$600,000 renovating the downtown area, for everybody, not just for residents. And we've got to pro-

tect that interest. People were locking up their bikes to \$200 to \$300 worth of trees that had just been planted."

Allen used another reason for the bike ordinance.

"Safety, that's the main thing. Downtown merchants were complaining that their customers were almost knocked down by people on bikes when they stepped out of the store. Some of the very ones that requested the ordinance to begin with have signed the petition to have it repealed." He shook his grey, balding head. "You just can't please everybody."



Keeping bikes in their places

In the town where you live, don't they have laws like this?" Councilwoman Mary Fortenberry wanted to know, leaning forward with raised eyebrows.

"No," the reporter replied, and Fortenberry went on, tight-lipped.

"Well, its not uncommon to have these laws. The pedestrian has the right-of-way and it is awfully easy to step out onto the sidewalk into someone riding a bicycle. Why, I was almost knocked down once myself!"

Fortenberry justified several of her stands on other controversial student issues on the basis that the traditional, accepted ways of doing things are best.

Allen also seemed to adopt this "that's-the-way-everybody-else-does-it attitude," judging from his comments on the zoning regulations that prohibit most students from living in sections R80, R100, R125, R2 and R2A which makes up most of the city's residential areas. (see map)

"These zoning laws are typical of any university town. Not only in university towns but in practically every town, there are zones . . . like for one-family units only," Allen said.

One City Hall official denied that the zoning laws prohibited students.

"I know a couple of students that live right down the road from me, and I live in a zoned area."

Further questioning revealed that the students were brother and sister.

The laws prohibit people who are not related by blood or marriage, such as roommates, from living in the restricted zones.

When questioned on the issue of changing the date of the city elections, Fortenberry once again felt that old ways are the best ways.

"City elections have always been held in late August, to my knowledge, with the run-offs taking place in September," she said, "Not just in Auburn, but across the state."

(In truth, several towns, including Tuskegee and Tuscaloosa, hold their elections at varying times of the year when the students can vote.)

"Our present fiscal year corresponds to that of the government of the state of Alabama and the government of the United States, and there is every reason

to keep October 1 as the beginning and none to change it. Anyway, the outgoing Council already begins preparing the new budget to help the incoming Council so there will be a smooth transition," she finished.

On hearing this reasoning, one political science professor smiled ruefully and remarked that it may be a slight inconvenience to change the date of elections, but that was all.

Several of the Council members have said they would vote in favor of a resolution to change the election date if there is sufficient interest.

The Alabama State Legislature makes the actual decision on changing the date, usually based on a resolution from the city council or on the recommendation of a strong interest group.

Kurt Furst, representing the interest group of the Auburn student body, went to Montgomery in the early part of February to talk with several state legislators about making the change. Senator Ted Little and Representative Charles Whatley said they would not oppose a bill changing the election date. Two other members of the legislature said they would like to see the support of the City Council before making a decision and one was undecided.

"Echoing the City Council's general sentiment, Allen said, "I see no opposition to a resolution if there is sufficient interest, but before the last election, the county registrars went to the campus and registered about 1000 students to vote. And in the spring elections, I know that a lot of students were gone, but not a single student cast an absentee ballot, not one. To me this indicated a lack of student initiative."

Mayor Don E. Hayhurst, an advocate for the change since his own election to office, said that he teaches in his political science classes that "Government, at whatever level, must respond to organized and articulate groups."

We go through this about twice a year," Allen said almost tiredly, "Student interest in local politics is passing . . . uh., transient. It happens every spring when the new SGA officers come in and then when they return in the fall, but it dies in

between everytime."

Ron Taylor disagreed, "I have only two months left in office, but for the last 10 months I have been here, there has been interest," he said.

"The reason it is so difficult to get anything accomplished is because of the yearly SGA office turnovers," he went on, "Each president elected has different priorities, but I don't really care what mine are, because the students want the right to vote right now."

Kurt Furst said, "There has never really been an organized campaign to present our ideas to the Council. People have had good ideas, but just haven't been able to follow through. But this time," he added, "when they ask why, we will have the answers, along with a few alternatives."

Helping Furst with his presentation at the February 5th meeting, Dennis Ross, SGA executive cabinet secretary for political affairs, handed out copies of a petition package to the City Council members.

"We respectfully submit this to you," Furst said, "And ask that you set a public hearing to discuss this in detail."

"I myself would like to meet with each of you to discuss this, because I feel like that maybe the SGA hasn't expressed itself well in the past few years."

The men and women looked over the papers, talking among themselves. A whispered phrase drifted over to the front row.

"Ask for time to look this over."

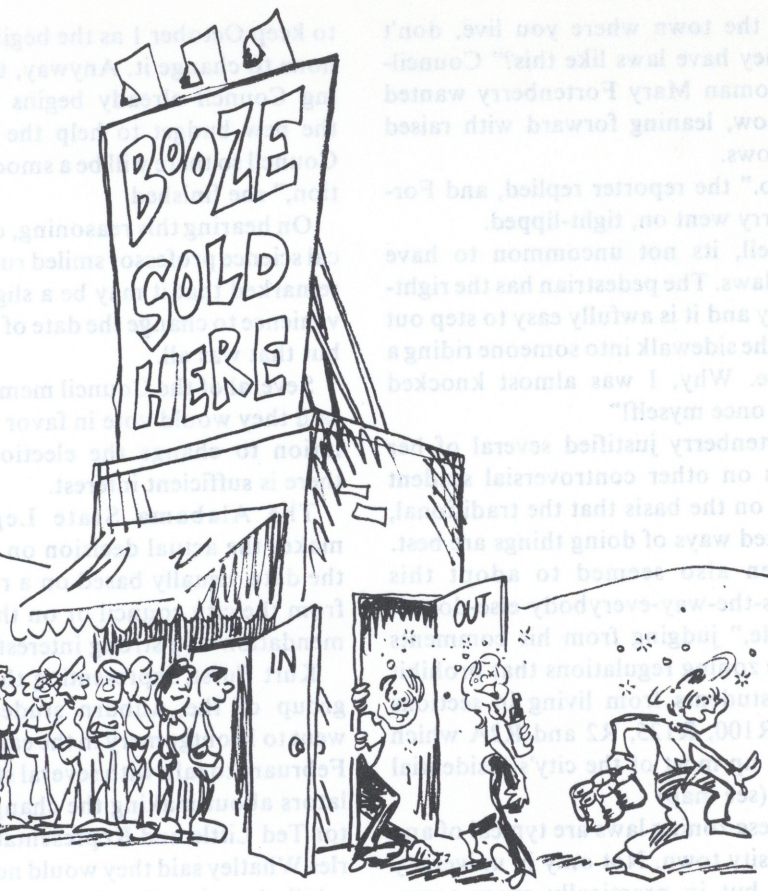
After he finished speaking, they did just that. Allen thanked Furst for his interest and comments, inviting him to make his oral presentations "or whatever" at the date set later for discussion.

Time seems to be the enemy of the student and the excuse of the Council. Time will shortly see the SGA elections taking place, filling offices with possibly inexperienced persons with new priorities.

Time will watch student interest inevitably turn to other matters, such as grades, as the quarter draws to a close.

Time and discouragement will probably see the return of the apathy Council President Bill Allen confidently predicts. And then all will be well once again in the city of Auburn.





A Modest Proposal

By Caroline Nutter

In a recent public hearing, the Auburn City Council heard arguments on a controversial ordinance calling for the rezoning of Glendean Shopping Center to permit location of a state packaged liquor store.

Doesn't anyone know the sort of bedlam this will cause in the loveliest village? Can't you just see the snake-like trail of cars slithering slowly around the shaded nooks and quiet cul-de-sacs surrounding Dean Road, waiting to pounce on the first vacant parking space at Auburn's newest watering hole? Doesn't anyone realize the decadence this decision could trigger?

Surely, Glenn Road, the quaint thoroughfare leading to the heartbeat of our university town will be dubbed "Bourbon Street". Innocent children will stumble over the winos scattered on sidewalks when the mother in charge of carpooling detours by the drycleaners

on her way home. Painted ladies in red satin hotpants and fishnet stockings will stroll through the aisles of Winn-Dixie grocery threatening to corrupt passers-by.

Can you imagine the dreadful snatches of conversation which will trickle from the mouths of veritable babes while they impatiently wait their turn behind the selection counter like hogs awaiting at the trough?

"What should we get?" queries a bearded tot who couldn't be older than 22.

"Wild Turkey," retorts his Levi-clad playmate, slobbering with delight in front of a liquor display cabinet.

At another scene, miles across town, two young housewives are shoved away from the milk and eggs section of their favorite grocery by two over-sized Barbie dolls dressed in Greek letters.

"How many six packs do you reckon we oughta get?" asks the redhead to the blonde.

"Oh, get a case," retorts Blondie. "I wanna get plastered."

I think all sober citizens in the Auburn community will agree that this prodigious number of oversized children who clog major roadways and monopolize public places with their insatiable desire to lose their wits only enhances Auburn's reputation as one of Playboy Magazine's "Top Ten Party Schools in the Nation." Clearly, in view of the university's over-extended enrollment and limited housing and parking facilities, it would be advantageous to create a method of weeding out these incorrigible undesirables, thus making Auburn a better place for teetotalers to live.

It seems obvious to me that the most efficient way to attack alcohol abuse in Auburn is to erase the method to madness—we need to eliminate alcohol altogether. Of course, such drastic action will require some minor alterations to university traditions, but it won't be the first time the institution will have acted

Drawings by Bill Holbrook

in the name of progress—Auburn camouflaged its old ways like a chameleon when it first admitted women. The very necessary changes induced by alcohol reformation will promote a more wholesome community image by cleaning up illicit activities, unhealthy recreation, the public nuisance of noisy parties, and the unintelligent butchering of the English language.

Take, for example, the subject of illegal recruiting. No longer will athletic officials be allowed to pull strings over scotch and water. Instead, perhaps they could promote “getting high on health” and serve carrot and grapefruit juice to lure prospective athletes.

As a matter of fact, the need for football could be almost entirely washed away if we outlaw liquor in this town. Everyone knows half of the Auburn spirit is contained in flasks, so why not abolish the most elaborate vehicle for students’ public drunkenness and convert the stadium into a facility housing some other recreational event. Perhaps “dodge the sniper” would be an appropriate game alternative. Spectators would find

it necessary to remain alert and agile if they valued their lives at all.

Greek social life would take a definite turn for the better if liquor was not accessible. Loud bands and trashy performers would become a thing of the past since students would regain their hearing and eyesight and realize the absurdity of wild entertainment. Additionally, dances in general could be abolished. What fraternity man do you know who would get out on the floor and gator without a case of MD 20/20 under his belt?

The abolition of alcohol in Auburn would add a little reality to the community while cutting down on the number of perpetually happy people since all “Happy Hours” would have to be abolished. Also, the ritualistic weekend trips to the mountains would be eliminated because Busch beer would vanish from grocery refrigerators. As a matter of fact, weekends themselves will no longer be necessary since they won’t be “made for Michelob,” so students will gain an extended study week.

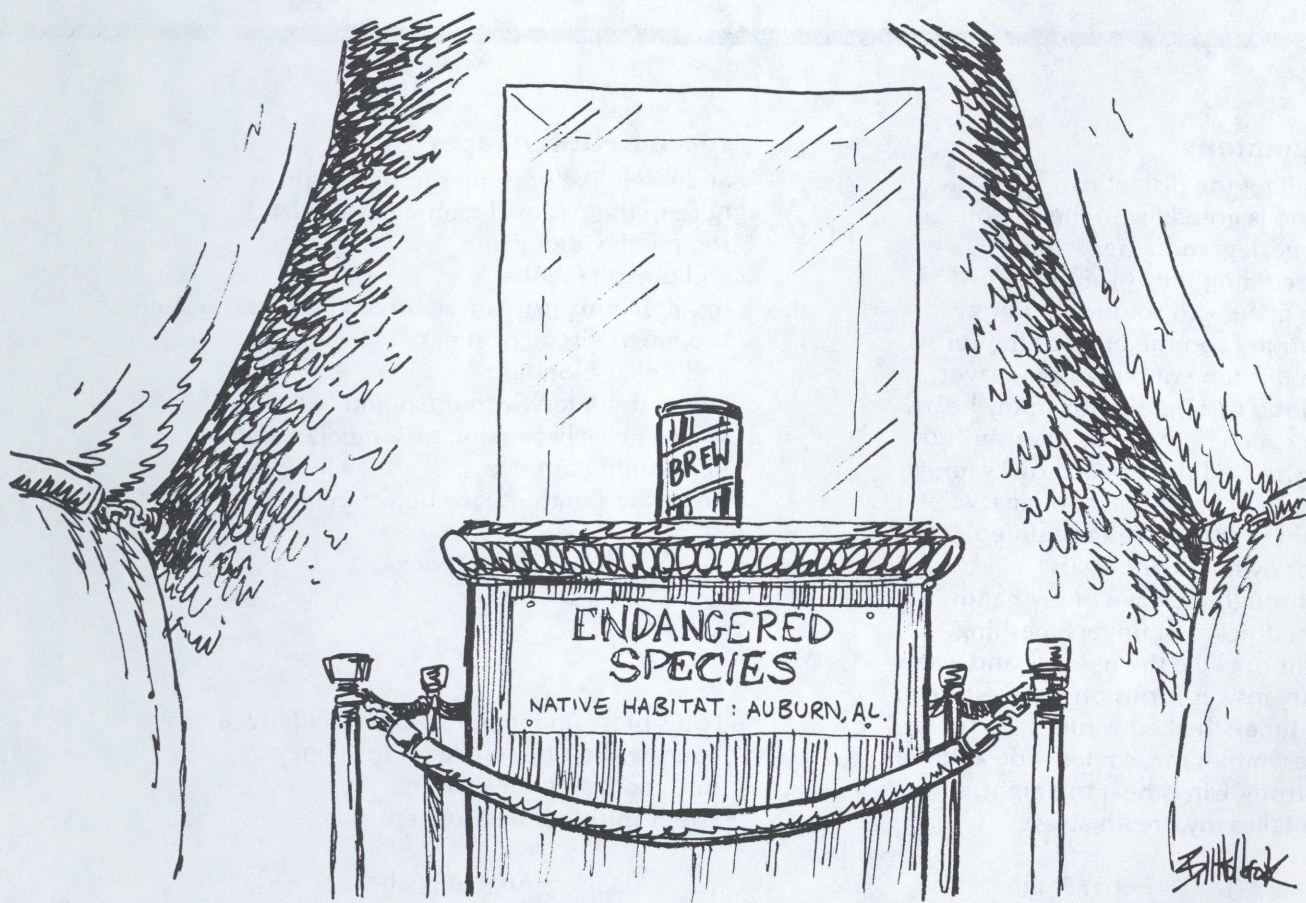
Preceding final exams, there will not

be an unnecessary “dead day”—everyone will be alive and well, thus eliminating the necessity of a specific day devoted to the sole purpose of alcohol recovery.

The English language will improve, too, if we are able to do away with drinking in Auburn. “Wild Turkey” will refer only to societal misfits, while “plastered” will only describe projects at Biggin Hall. A “six pack” could only be one of three things: six groups of foxes, a box of crayons or six pieces of Juicy Fruit.

Auburn needs to improve its “party school” image. It needs to repeal the laws promoting alcohol abuse within the university community and eliminate the overly abundant degenerates who perpetuate alcohol abuse in Auburn. What do students go to college for anyway, to have a good time?

Keep your fingers crossed that the rowdy barbarians don’t discover some other hallucinogen once we abolish alcohol—I doubt that I could come up with a proposal to eliminate catnip-induced euphoria.





Writer's Slump

Here I sit
with pen in hand
waiting for my heart
to supply the ink.
As the rain tatters the window,
and wet-nosed hounds bay in the distance.
Here I sit.
Suicidal.

—F. Keith Ayers

Summons

Calling the distant owl
who is greedy with the season,
I recall grandfather's voice
becoming the voice of the owl
to mate with some wild thing
cautious on the edge of the forest.
In this time of blown red leaves,
blood turning silently in my heart,
I crouch in the fog's blue shroud,
try to find the screech owl's tones
deep in my throat and legacy
where they have slept unfed
for over a dozen years.
Through the cave of my hands,
the thicket of fingers meshing,
I hoot twice the old way and wait.
An answer forms on air, westward;
a time-streaked winter face rises,
resembles me, smiles wide and flies.
Strong wings beat the night.
It takes my breath away.

—R.T. Smith

space between faces

and it felt like bessemer to birmingham
here in the national teen-age wasteland
too much video game
and pinball feedback
too much mainstream static on the music machines
too much disco christmas
and dollar blondie
and tv dysentary with the nightly news
so I was ch-ch-choking on a media hambone
til I caught your eye
suspended in the space between faces

—Amy Dawes

Lotus blossom memories crowd faded tea cups,
Pouring their fragrance on Irish linen.
And there sing their dirges,
Sweet spirituals resurrected.

—Angelee Ashe

Six Movement Poem In Winter Morning From Sitting Like Holy Man

This poem concerns the transfer of energy from one brain to the next and the next through the practice of "sitting", or spending great amounts of time in solitude. We all have three brains: the reptile brain, source of coldness, low energy; and hard images; the mammal brain, source of warmth and physical anxiety; and the New Brain, source of light, spirituality, and great force and energy. These ideas, which are somewhat new to western culture, are elaborated on in the works of the poet Robert Bly and others. Transferring a great amount of energy into the New Brain is not an easy task, but when it happens it is an exciting experience.

—D.W.G.

1

I have the hot cup of tea
For survival
I am warm and begin

2

The body tightens
It's anxious
It wants to move
It wants to jump
Into the hair of a woman right now!
It wants to stay there for day for weeks forever!

3

In the palms of the hands
There is a warmth felt
Without touching them
The body is still
Remember at this moment
The hair is forgotten
A womb of light disappears
Behind the dark eyes

4

A force presses
Like magnets
Against the temples
And against the front door
Of the head

Something wants out pulled out
Like a man's dream of rushing to his woman
After seven long years in exile!
Like Dali's paintbrush just before
Raphael's head explodes!
What? Another body? Flames? The Universe?

5

I want the woman
(Ah if she only knew)
With the sun-hair
Walking by just now
Behind the small woods
In the bright clear morning!

6

I'm cold again and know
I have just missed
By a tiny hair
Something like fireworks
Or a voice in another country
But ah! Look at this all morning
The three rivers flowing out of my left hand!

—Dean Wiseman Golden



Paining by Elizabeth Downing

Both Sides Now

Conversations with Auburn Homosexuals about Relationships, Families and the Future.

by Marilyn Kitchens and
Vickey Williams

What problems do you face in everyday life?" "Doing the dishes, cooking, doing the laundry", said one female.

The room broke into laughter as two previously nervous journalists, who had all their questions carefully written out, breathed a sigh of relief. We had begun as though we were talking to "special" people; those "different" from ourselves. But the course of the interview had changed with the group of nine homosexuals setting us straight: they were not that different from us, even though their chosen sexual preference forces them to lead a somewhat different lifestyle. Sexual preference is a personal thing, one female said. "If I were heterosexual, people wouldn't walk up and ask me, 'How's the men?'"

The group began to convey their ideas about homosexuality along with feelings about their situations. "I think upbringing, emotions, and everything that makes you a person goes into selection of a sexual preference," said one student majoring in art. "I guess I knew I was gay when I was in the second grade. But when I was in sixth grade, I read an article about lesbians and said to myself, 'Hey, that's me.'" Seven members of the group said they believed that being homosexual was a result of environmental stimuli. One said she believed it was inborn and one believed it is a combination of the two. One woman from Anniston felt that everyone is born bisexual, and that rewards and punishments made the difference in the way of life one chooses. "I knew how I felt from the time I was six or seven

years old," she said. "I fought it all through high school by dating lots of boys, but there were no feelings there. I finally gave up dating males at 18 and accepted my feelings."

Another female from a small South Alabama town said it was not until she was 20 years old and a sophomore at Auburn that she realized a conflict within her and it was not until then that she accepted her feelings. "I felt torn because of the feelings within me. I knew I was different as a child, and looking back now, I realize there is a part of me that was tortured because of my confusion. I realize now that all my strong figures, all my heroes, were women," she said.

A tall, blond, well-dressed man, who could have passed for a fraternity president, said he grew up in a very closed environment. "Because my classes were small I didn't have many friends. I turned towards music and the arts. As a teenager I met and became close to a homosexual man. I was indecisive at 14, but at age 15, I made my decision. I finally felt comfortable. I looked at the world like it was a big sponge and I had finally found a place I could fit in."

Another man, dark-haired, 6-foot-5, and looking far from effeminate, told of his harsh childhood. "I knew from the time I was in the second or third grade something about me was different. I was picked on, and it confused me. I didn't know why I was different. I had more friendships with girls than boys and by age 19 I knew homosexuality was an integral part of my life."

One female art major from the northeast said she had felt homosexual stirrings since an early age, "but as a second quarter freshman here I found out what life was all about for me."

A shapely blond who said she has always enjoyed athletics, said that although she grew up being a "tomboy," "I never knew what the labels homosexual and heterosexual meant until I was 15. I dated and loved a man for about six years and thought I was happy. I was really worried and nervous. Finally one day everything inside of me just turned over. I admitted what I had known for a long time, that I wasn't happy with a man — that I preferred women. I met some gay friends and for the first time in my life I identified with a group of people. I felt like I finally belonged somewhere."

After deciding on the gay style of life, the first thing most homosexuals do is seek out others like themselves. "I've established a microcosm of gay friends. Not that I'm not in the real world — I'm a student and I have to be. But being around others like myself, I've gotten used to saying it," said one male.

Even though none of the individuals interviewed said they were trying to hide their lifestyles, one said, "It's usually better if you tell someone after you've gotten to know them a month or so."

One soft-spoken brunette said she'd never met anyone who "drew away" from her when they found out her sexual preference, and she knows no reason why anyone should.

After discovering they are homosexual, many begin to face problems involved with their families, along with problems stemming from religious upbringing. Three of the young men and women interviewed said their families knew of their lifestyles and most of the others said their families suspected their homosexuality. One male reared near Birmingham said his parents found out by opening his personal mail. "My

father was angry and said he was going to take me out of school if I didn't 'cut that stuff out,'" said the male. "It was the most traumatic experience of my life. My father cried and threatened me. He wanted me to deny everything to my mother. He thought he'd failed me as a father. It was a bad way for him to find out. He used the word 'queer.' But it was strange after that. He never mentioned it again, but it's been in the air. We've grown apart since then. After returning to school, I wrote him a long letter where he worked, trying to explain

everything. He never answered."

Several others said they felt their families suspected their homosexuality. "One day my father and I sat down and had a long, personal talk. He added at the end that he hoped I would come to him with any problems, 'even if you were a lesbian,'" said one co-ed.

One female homosexual couple said they were confronted with questions while visiting one of their homes. "While she was in the shower her father told me he appreciated the friendship I had given her and asked me what was going

on between us. I just told him that I loved her with no big explanation."

Only one of those interviewed said her family has no suspicions of her homosexuality. "It's because they trust me so much. My hometown worries me. It's not a guilt trip but I would hate to see my family disappointed. Maybe shocked is a better word."

Most of the nine said they would eventually like to have children and two of them said they would probably eventually marry. One man said he would be married "only to a gay woman. I'd like



Drawing by Elizabeth Downing

to have kids but we'd have a very open marriage. She could have her outside relationships and I'd have mine."

Several of the women said they would like to have children either by a short relationship with a man, or by adoption. One said she has no interest in going through the pains of childbirth but if her mate ever did she would help raise the child. Only one woman said she has no interest in rearing a child. "I don't want that much responsibility," the woman said, "but I would share my love with any child that needed me."

"At one point I went through a problem with religion," said one of the females. "My grandmother thinks homosexuals are sinful and the scum of the earth. But that doesn't make me love her any less."

All but one of the individuals interviewed said they believed in a supreme being of some sort. Most said they have a personal relationship with God which they see as unaffected by their sexual preference. "I don't see how God could condemn a love that has made me such a better, giving and fuller person," said one art major.

"In this Bible Belt community it's really hard to expose yourself as a homosexual. You have to be really daring," said one coed who was reared in Nashville.

Gays have to go to special extremes to find people like themselves, the group agreed, and certain "hangouts" show up from time to time to facilitate the process. "At one time men used to cruise (look for dates) in Samford Park at night. I don't know if it was the installation of the lights or what happened to stop it. I don't know anywhere the women go," said one homosexual male.

"I've been approached before while taking a shower at the Coliseum," said another man. "My shower was broken and I had to bathe there for a couple of weeks once, and I got leers from everybody from fraternity brothers to people who looked like faculty members."

Not only is the dating different, but should a relationship begin, it will have a special set of rules also. "We never start out with roles. They're usually swapped back and forth. Neither of the couple has to feel the weak one or the

strong one," said one female currently involved in a serious relationship.

"It's more give-and take than heterosexual relationships. Sometimes one member of the couple will cook or clean up, but there are no set rules. It's just what you enjoy doing," said one of the males. "Most people think that when they find out two homosexuals are living together that they're lovers. That's not so. We have friendships too."

Those questioned said they have developed a most accurate sense of knowing almost instantly whether those they met on the street are gay or straight. "I can see it in their eyes. It's just a look, a knowing," said one of the man. "I bet I pass a dozen other homosexual men a day walking to class."

There were two female couples at the interview, one had been together nine months, the other two years. The couple who had been together the longest said they were best friends months before they became lovers. "I know we'll be together a long time from now," said one of the girls. She said that in 10 years she hopes both she and her mate have their graduate degrees and are living together teaching. They said they want to have a child "in about 12 years."

The other two women say they are less sure about their future. "We just take every day as it comes. I'm sure we'll be together, say six months from now, but after that, who knows? And if we end, we'll still be friends."

The other five people said they were still looking for someone special. They face the problems involved with their new lifestyles relying on their common friendship.

Homosexuality is more prevalent in this area than one might think, according to those interviewed. "We all belong to a group of about 30-50 close friends who have parties together. I guess I know of about 100 others who are gay, too, but who aren't close friends."

One main concern expressed by those interviewed is the lack of a place to go for recreation in Auburn. "We've danced together at public places but people either thought 'hey, look at those two drunk broads,' or they got really hostile," said one woman who works as a cook in a local restaurant.

"We just have to wait until someone

has a private party," said another woman. "We feel like we can't even hold hands while we walk to class or anything. It's just not fair."

The idea that homosexuals tend to be more sexually promiscuous than their heterosexual counterparts is a fallacy, according to those surveyed. "Just because there are no babies involved, that doesn't mean sex is taken lightly. There are still a small percentage who go out to bars and look for one-night stands but there are plenty of heterosexuals who do that," said a brunette coed. It's all in your value system. Lasting relationships don't start in a bar."

Contrary to what some people expect, homosexuals are not stereotyped in appearance or background. Several of the homosexuals interviewed said they came from very happy homes and were neglected by neither parent. They said they don't believe theories which say homosexuals tend to come from broken homes or are the product of unhappy marriages.

"I know gays in every curriculum," said one male. "Departments like art and architecture might seem to have more, but that's just because these people are constantly showing themselves in their work. It's just the atmosphere."

In some departments they're easy to pick out, claimed another man. "It's as easy as picking out black and white."

"But we don't fit the stereotypes," added a petite, soft-spoken brunette. "People see women gays as truck drivers and the men as people who hang around grammar school play grounds. It's just not so."

"I get mad every once in a while," one of the women said. "I just want to take some people and say, 'I'm no weirder than you are.'"

The group said they are not bitter about the way they must live their lives and like everyone, they are just looking for happiness. "We are obviously different," said another woman, "but the difference is not that great. There are a lot of people that are different from others. When you get down to it, the concern is sexual preference and what's wrong with it. But that's not such a great overbearing reason to treat something the way a lot of people treat homosexuals."



With stable-static faces
 They take it all in stride
 With the decal smile insignia
 Of "well-adjusted" folk.
 They tsk-tsk over tragedy.
 Their laughter shoo-shoos doubt away.
 They strap wild swelling joys
 Into contained, appropriate pose.

Like kids in carnival cars that follow fenced-in tracks
 They tour their days on no-risk plans.
 Love, hate, weep, dream in moderation
 With no more variation
 Than the just-dead white light heart beat line
 On a still, black, empty screen.

—Leslie A. Blackmon

prime time

in another age giotto might have used her face
 as the model of an angel's—a liquid halo
 of blonde hair surrounding the pale eyes,
 the full lips pouting for the glory of god.

in these days of modern times her face
 is used by other men whose point of view
 alters like a finger in water. instead
 of the angels dancing in a human head,

her eyes reflect a hangnail moon
 that proceeds the nightrain—the storm of words
 dividing a man from his own darkness.
 tonight her face is talking from a fresco

damp with electric dots. her smile's beatitude
 could sell me anything, even myself.

—A.J. Wright



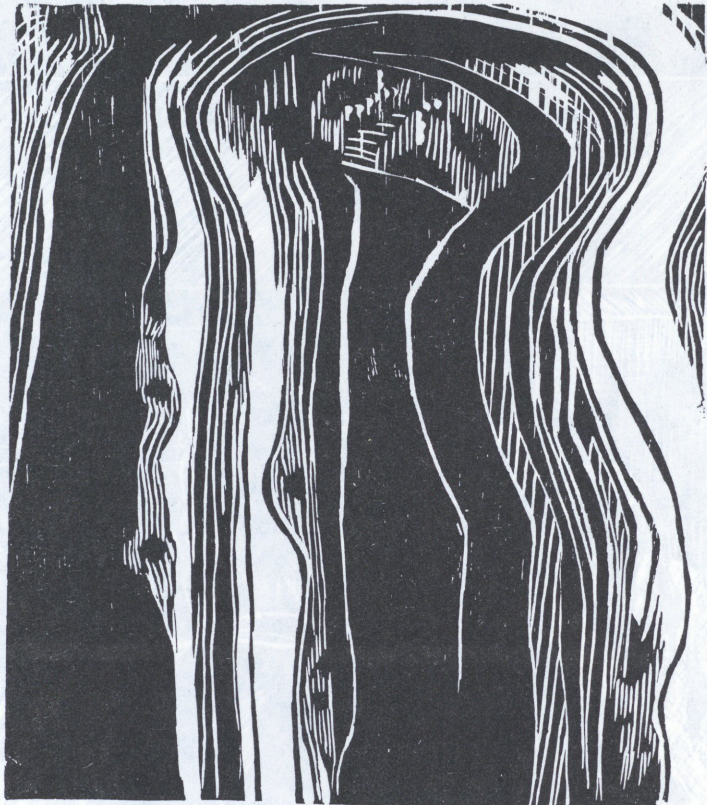
Drawing by Christopher Payne

night and fog
(december 7, 1971)

all day i lifted stones and cut the wood
and saw no one:
the cold air fit me
like another skin;
the sky remained a dull silver,
the color of razor blades.
a leaf may have fallen,
but i didn't notice it.

i cut and lifted
until the absolute darkness of caves
clustered in the heart.
returning home
i must have died along the way;
in the kitchen i felt
as if i had merely walked
across a room and back
and found my starting place the same
but a different person in it.
later
(the cat a puddle of fur and bones
in my lap)
the wood stretches and yawns
floating in the fire.
shadows whisper at the walls,
but now i see no need
for any conversation.

—A.J. Wright

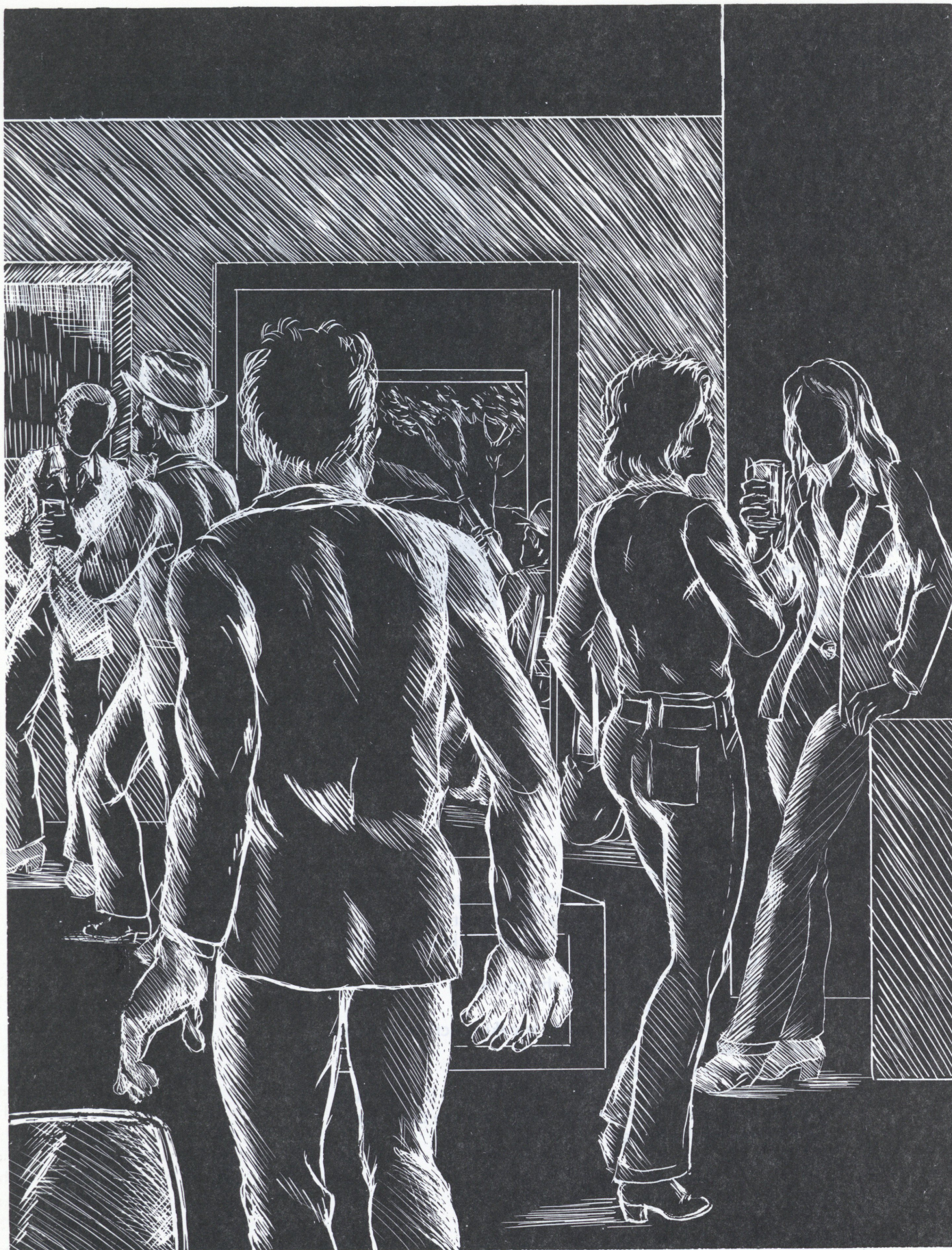


crossing the bridge

it was not the best of methods
that summer of the docks. Below the bridge
we watched the river, rolling by like august
and the semis in the night that left behind lonely thunder
we thought of summer ending
and both of us thought of sex, the spoiler
and you couldn't look at me
just your hand, a shameful traitor sneaking across the lines
a guilty scab crossing the picket
a fox come to steal the chickens
your face a distant mask, blue eyes settled on the highway
where even the truckers, those mile-a-minute cowboys
were crossing the bridge

—Ariel Jones

Woodcut by Jerri Hudson



Drawing by William Mitchell

Local People

fiction by Bruce West

Twilight came and the stars began to appear in the sky. When night came the Hookman appeared. He was going to a party. The Hookman walked with a crouch. His right arm was stiff and useless, but it curved slightly at the elbow, so that it had the curvature of a sickle. He was called the Hookman because when he met a pretty girl he would edge up close to her and swing his deformed right arm out and around her waist, while using his good left arm to secure his hold. He was very popular at parties, but he only appeared on Friday nights. The rest of the week he was never seen.

Chicken Love was also at the party. She taught the ninth grade classes at the school in town. She was given the name Chicken Love by some of the local boys. Her real name was Emily. She wasn't bad looking, but she made up for it with her personality. She was from a town in south Alabama, and got her B.A. degree from one of the many fine universities in Alabama. Her father owned a small grocery store in her home town, and she went back there and worked in her father's store every summer.

Now the Hookman didn't come out very often, but it was October, the moon was full, and the sidewalks of Demopolis shone like silver in the moonlight. On Friday nights the important people of Demopolis would eat supper at the Demopolis Inn, which was an old four-story hotel on the main square, within walking distance of the river. The Hookman shambled past the Demopolis Inn. "Good evening, Hookman," said the manager of the paper mill as he escorted his wife to dinner, and the Hookman nodded his head in greeting.

The Hookman soon arrived at John and Paul's house. As he came in through the kitchen door and entered the crowded rooms, pieces of conversations rose to meet him like a symphony. A cowboy gave him a glass of beer.

"He's been giving everybody trouble." This was Chicken Love talking about her teaching job. "Yesterday I said to him, 'Lonnie, sit in your chair and keep quiet, I don't want to hear another word out of you.' I almost got hit the other day. Him and Mike was about to get in a fight. I just jumped in between them. 'Go to the office!' I said. I swear that boy is going to jail. There ain't nothing that anyone can do for him. Everyone knows what kind of boy he is. Coach Sellers said that the next

time I had any trouble just to call him."

"Oh Barbara," Chicken Love squealed, "where you been these days? Let's go in the kitchen and listen to them play guitar. I had to flat out slap a boy the other day. We were drinking beer and cooking out on the grill, and David just kept pinching me on the tail. I told him to quit, but when he didn't I slapped him. Have you seen that new dress I bought? I paid too much money for it, but I'm just a fool."

Chicken Love and Barbara went into the kitchen, where two country boys were playing guitars.

At John's house there was always plenty of room. The front door led to the front room, and the front room led to the kitchen, and the kitchen led to the back porch, and the back porch led to the backyard, and the backyard led to the vacant lot, and there was never any loss in continuity. So the party led from the front room, to the kitchen, to the back porch, to the yard, to the vacant lot, and there was no lack of laughter or noise.

Ho Chin, the Asian Beagle, was in his customary spot on the back porch. He always spent his idle time there, where he could lay in the sun and keep an eye on the vacant lot. Ho Chin was a full-fledged member of John and Paul's house. One summer evening, John and Paul were eating spaghetti and watching the evening news on the television, when in through the front door walked a beagle. The beagle stopped and looked at John and then at Paul.

"This sure is a funny looking beagle," said Paul. "His eyes look like they are slanted."

"Yeah," said John, "he looks almost Asian."

"Let's call this dog Ho Chin, the Asian Begle," said Paul.

The name seemed to stick. He was free to leave, but Ho Chin stayed with them, and no one ever came to claim him, so Ho Chin became their dog. He chased rabbits now and then, just for sport, and he layed around the house a lot, and he was a good dog to talk to when you were feeling blue.

Chicken Love just talked and talked and talked and talked and talked and talked. The Hookman joined the people in the bedroom who were smoking marijuana and eating fondu. John and Ho Chin sat on the back porch and watched the people. John could almost hear the muddy river as it turned past the limestone bluffs and made its way through the broad flatlands. He wished that he and Paul and Ho Chin were out in their canoe, on the moonlit river.





Photograph by Jack Mallette

Compassion

In heaven
The drop of a tear
from a burdened soul
resounds like thunder.

—Dickson Brown

9 Dive

Remember to think.
somersault, twist twist twisting
Wait...spot...now
Stretching and tight,
Leave air to split water.
No splash.
Each drop sucked down after flexed feet
Like a kitchen sink, unplugged
When the last knife is rinsed
Clean.

—Sissi Carroll

Perspective

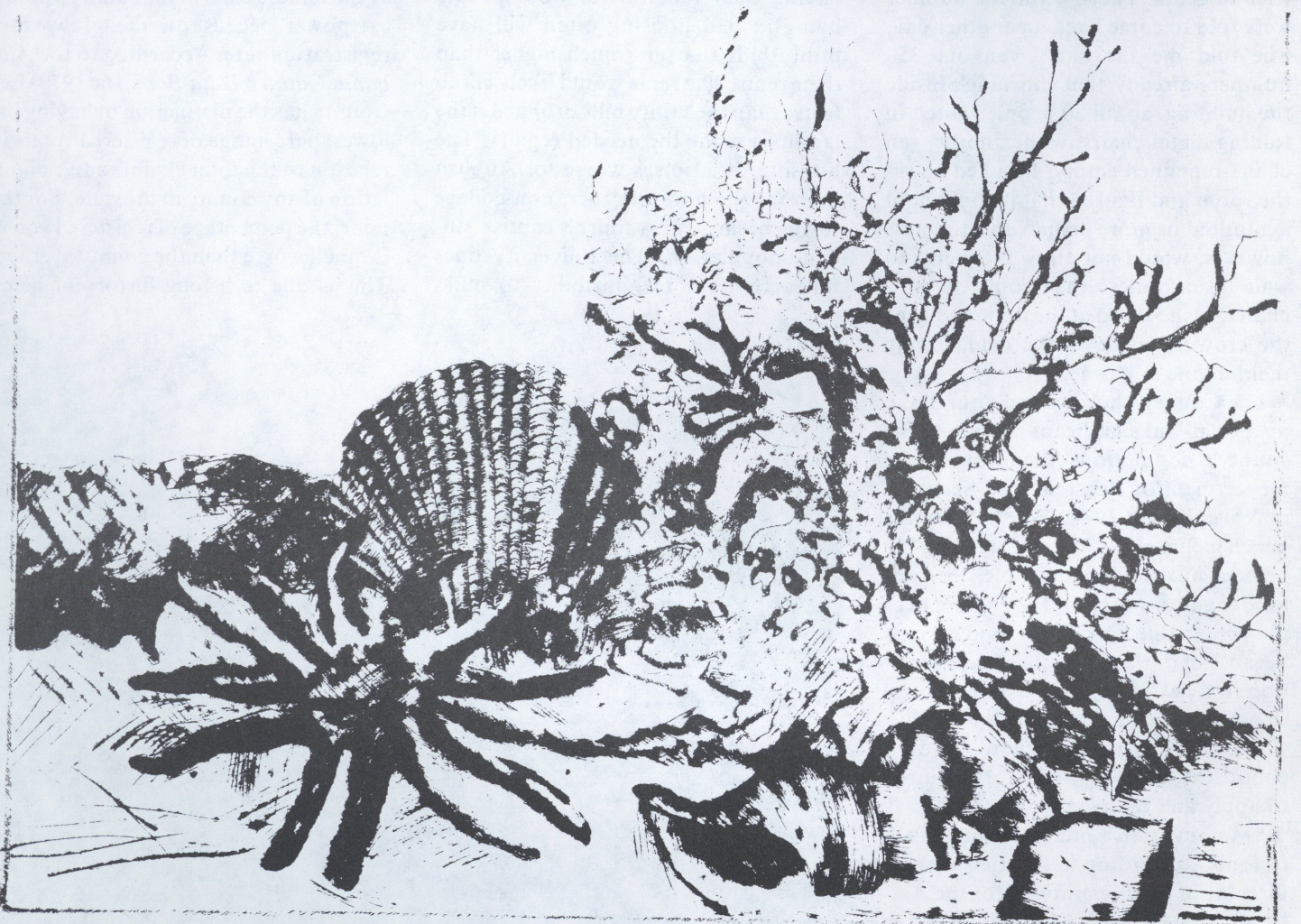
My friend complains about
telephone wires,
how they mar the view.
But I don't see any wires.
All I see
is a row of larks
and starlings.

—Phyllis Baker

If Thoughts Were Vapors

if thoughts were visibly vaporous,
rising above my head after being thunk;
friday afternoons would be fog-free,
history class only slightly misty,
and sitting in the sun-filled park, I would suffocate.

—Beth J. Dees



Drypoint by Cindy Michaels

Darkness on the Edge of Town

Lee County's poor share a host of problems including political disenfranchisement, inadequate housing, and hunger. Circle reporter Isaac Joyner surveys the problems and some steps being taken to solve them.

by Isaac Joyner

Shivering in the 20 degree cold, 150 people waited last February 1 for their turn to enter the Lee County Food Stamp Office in Opelika. Some of them had been waiting outside this bare metal building since 4 a.m. When I arrived at 8 a.m., a small white-haired woman stood guard at the door collecting numbered pink cardboard slips from people who tried to get in. Those without a number were told to come back on another day. She told me she had given out 350 numbers already that morning. Inside the building, about 30 people waited in folding metal chairs, while another ten chairs remained empty. I looked about the room and figured that it could hold a hundred or more people; the director, however, would not allow recipients to wait inside unless they could sit in a chair. So she stood at the door and kept the crowd outside in the cold, letting them in one at a time.

Lee County's hungry and poor make up a small but significant portion of the county's population. According to the Department of Pensions and Security, in November of 1979, 2621 households which included 8197 people, or about 52 percent of the eligible people, received food stamps. Many of the eligible people are unable to receive food stamps because of the lack of public transportation in Lee County—they have no way to get to or from the office on the outskirts of Opelika, or are too old to endure the long time and effort required to apply and receive the stamps.

"Malnutrition is more than just a lack of food," according to Charles Nesbitt, director of field operations for the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger

(ACAH). "It is a lack of jobs, a lack of adequate education, and inadequate medical care." Hunger exists because the poor do not have as much control of their lives as middle class people do. For example, the poor spend a much larger portion of their income on housing than the middle class does. Tenants are often hesitant to complain about their living conditions for fear of being evicted or having their rent raised. Poor people living in bad housing often will have utility bills that are much higher than their rents. The rents would likely climb faster than the utility bills dropped if the landlord made the needed repairs. The housing situation is worse for Auburn than for the poor of other, non-college towns because of Auburn's captive student population. The university does not accept the responsibility to build

enough housing to maintain a comfortable vacancy rate; therefore, the low vacancy rate allows local landlords to charge inflated rates and to allow cheap housing to deteriorate. This not only affects the generally affluent students, but also the university's low income service employees who are often forced into substandard housing.

The poor do not claim as big a share as the middle class in the county's political power because of their low voter registration rate. According to the *Alabama County Data Book* for 1979, Lee County has the distinction of having the lowest percentage of registered voters in relation to the total eligible adult population of any county in the state. For the poor, the percentage of registered voters is much worse than the county average. This is due to a long history of being



discriminated against and to the current practices that inhibit greater registration of the poor. While registrars are sometimes at the Village Mall on Saturdays, no one makes an effort to register people at any of the community centers in the county's low-income neighborhoods. While the local public schools were supplied with reidentification pads to enable their teachers to easily reidentify, the Head Start program was overlooked. When a representative requested a pad, she was refused one. The poor, as a result of these and other practices which lead to low voter registration, have little power in county politics.

The Federal Government has designed seven food programs to aid the hungry. All of these programs look good on paper, but all have been implemented with only partial success. Two of the programs operating in Lee County are the Food Stamp Program and the Women, Infants, and Children Program. The Food Stamp Program is both the oldest and the most successful, but even it fails to reach as many hungry people as it should because it is so hard to use.

Funded by the US Department of Agriculture and operated in Alabama by the Department of Pensions and Security, the Food Stamp Program helps low-income people buy more food and improve their diets. The USDA pays all the cost of the stamps and one-half of the cost of operating the program with the other half coming from the tax on food stamp purchases. Food stamps can be used to buy any food, but they cannot be used for alcoholic beverages, tobacco, pet food, or other items such as soap and paper products commonly bought in the grocery store. The basic requirements for getting food stamps are having income and assets (property, stocks and bonds, etc.) below a certain level and meeting a work requirement unless exempted. If you are eligible for food stamps you will only be eligible for a certain time limit, called your certification period, usually three months. To continue getting food stamps, you must re-apply.

I applied for food stamps to see what the process is like. I drove out to Opelika the back way on East Glenn, and, after driving around through a ceme-



tery, eventually came upon the correct large metal building on Monroe Street. There is absolutely no indication of what the building is used for. I parked on the muddy red clay lot, ventured in to wait in line with four other people and was asked curtly by a young woman if I was applying. She then efficiently took my name and address, gave me a five-page application for, a slip of pink numbered cardboard, and told me to sit down. I sat and propped the application on my knee and filled it out as instructed.

The application asked about where I lived and with whom, how much money I made, if I got any other assistance, the amount of my rent and utility bills, and my racial heritage.

After about 20 minutes, I was called into an office adjacent to the waiting room. The social worker took my application and silently copied the information out onto another form. She asked a few questions such as to what kind and year of car I had and if I were a student or not.

She then prepared three form letters to verify the income information I had given her. One letter went to the Financial Aid Office asking if I were receiving any aid. Another letter went to my parents asking whether or not they claimed me for income tax purposes and how much money they gave me. I was to take the third letter to my employer to verify the amount of my wages. She also

instructed me to get a letter stating the amount of my utility bills from whom I had sublet my apartment.

The other somewhat successful program in Lee County dealing with hunger is designed to help produce healthier babies and lower the infant mortality rate. According to the State Bureau of Vital Statistics, Lee County has an infant mortality rate of 17.1 deaths per 100 live births, which breaks down to 9.0 deaths for whites and 31.2 for non-whites. The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program provides extra iron-rich foods to low-income pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children under age five. Ninety percent of all brain growth occurs between conception and age five; therefore, malnutrition during this time is a cause of mental retardation and brain damage. Because pregnant and nursing women are especially vulnerable to malnutrition, they are singled out for extra food. WIC provides low-income pregnant women, nursing mothers, and their children with 28 quarts of milk, 2 1/2 dozen eggs, 2 pounds of cheese, 36 ounces of cereal and 27 ounces of juice a month. Sponsored by the USDA and the Alabama Department of Public Health, WIC has only recently been implemented in Lee County although the program has been available nationally since 1973.

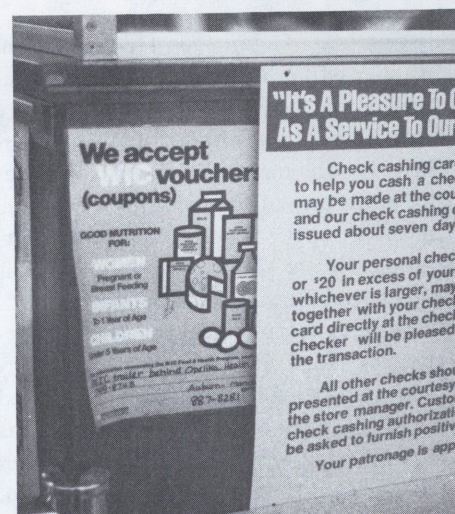
Predictably, Lee County and the state have been extremely slow in taking advantage of this program. Congress passed the program six years before it became established here. Only Madison County's poor had to wait longer than Lee County's. The State and County Public Health Departments both opposed an application by the Alabama Council on Human Relations (ACHR), the private agency which sponsors Lee County Head Start and the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger, in 1974 and subsequent years. Eventually Nancy Spears, director of Lee County Head Start, and ACHR filed suit against the state for its footdragging in establishing a Lee County WIC program. The State Health Department settled out of court and established WIC in Lee County through the Public Health Department and ACHR. The Public Health Department's program began operating in October. ACHR's program will begin in

mid-March.

On the corner of Glenn Avenue and Gay streets sits an old fraternity house that is the state headquarters of the largest social action group in the state, the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger, a private, non-profit, advocacy group dedicated to ending hunger and poverty among low-income people in Alabama. The Coalition organizes the poor, educates the poor about what programs are available and how to use and control those programs, and educates the public and public officials about the existence of hunger in Alabama through hunger tours. The Coalition was begun in 1976 with a \$10,000 grant from the Presbyterian Church along with the Alabama Council on Human Relations to increase Alabama's participation in the food stamp, school breakfast and the WIC programs. At that time Alabama, one of the nations poorest states, also had one of the lowest participation rates in these federal programs. The Coalition helps the poor by helping them keep in touch with the federal programs available to them. Even though the various federal programs "look good on paper," according to Bill Edwards the ACAH director, the Coalition sees its goal as making the "Federal programs work the way Congress intended for them to work."

Originally, the Coalition focused only on hunger, but due to the close relationship of hunger with other problems stemming from poverty, the Coalition is beginning to take on other activities such as organizing protests and lobbying for the poor in support of programs and funding for the Department of Pensions and Security. The Coalition also works with health care, welfare, and employment programs.

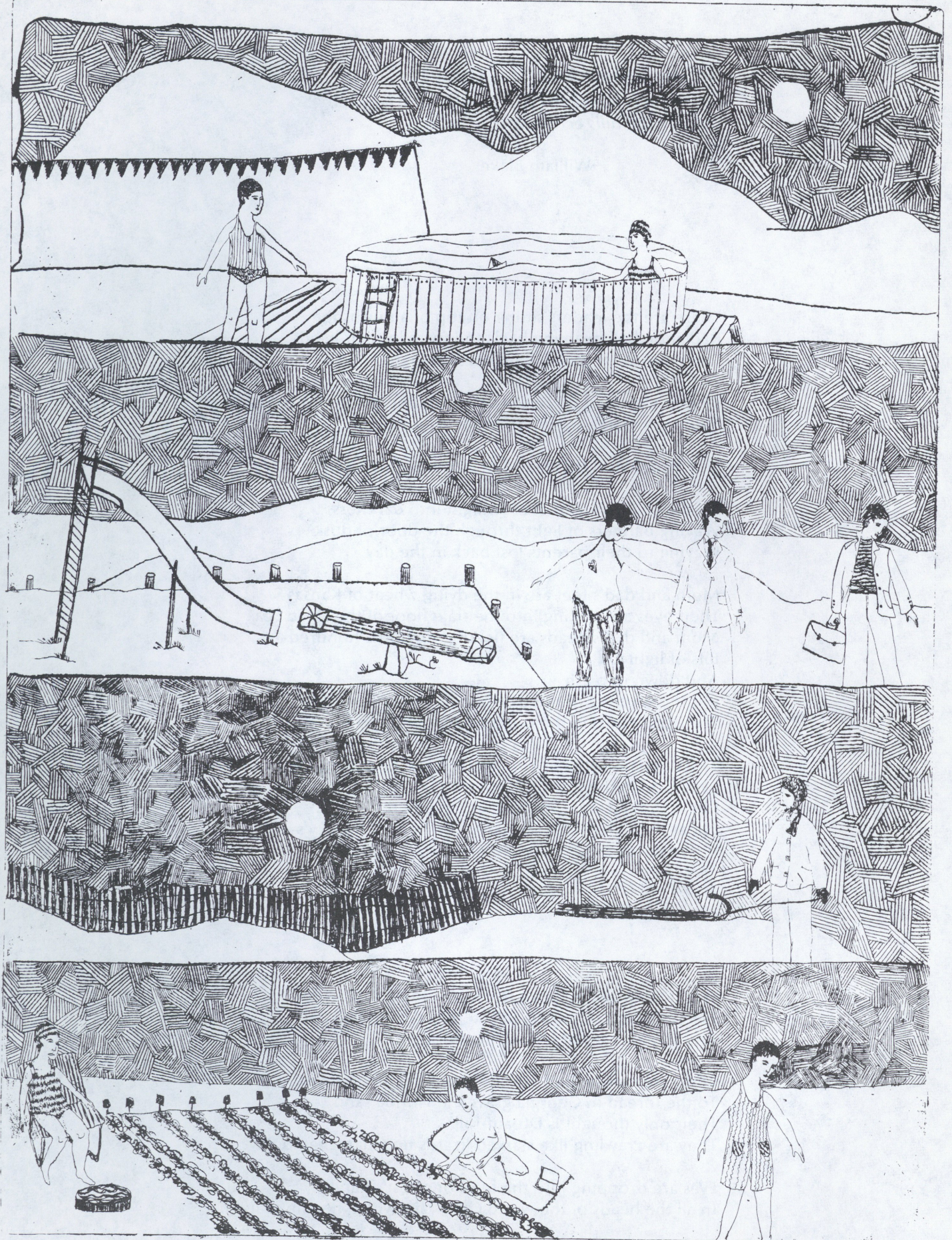
Even though the Coalition still has a large amount of work to do, significant progress has already been made. The Coalition was able to change the date for mail issuance of Food Stamps from the original state plan of June 1 to March 1. Mail issuance means that people will not have to wait outside in 20 degree weather anymore to receive their food stamps. Another sign of progress is that the Department of Pensions and Security is setting up an advisory committee made up of recipients and other concerned citizens to serve as a



communication channel between the recipients and the providers of social services. This committee will help educate the public about the special problems inherent in providing social services, will provide a base for legislative advocacy and reduce the alienation between case workers and their clients. The most important effect of this committee is that it will give the poor in Lee County more control over the institutions that affect their lives. The poor in this county still have many battles to fight such as Governor James' proposed budget cuts to The Department of Pensions and Security, the school lunch program and to Medicaid, but some progress has been made that can serve as a model for the future.

Boone-headed
Red-eyed
Dog-tired
and
Satisfied.

—Anne Johnson Leech



In The Country Of The Third Ear

*The little ones leaped and shouted and laughed
And all the hills echoed.*

—William Blake

I

There are the leaders sitting on top of a mushroom
Radiation ball beaming back and forth in their heads
The mushroom growing higher and higher like a beautiful balloon

Dogs are picking up books of poems and beginning to read them
The teeth marks are in the pages listen...

The throne is in the dead leaf of the grasshopper

All the children leap over twilight into darkness
Waving banners of light through the door of dusk
Waving to their parents lost back in the day

Mom and dad's feet are in the dying wheat of Kansas
Their eyes are sinking into the stale floor of the Dead Sea
Mom and dad's heads are floating up into a hundred
Bits of light
And down into ash
It is the warning of the word
The dark letters in the dog's eyes

This sleeping room of creation is spinning around on a hair's head
I see God in the fear of death which is not light or darkness
I hear the old voice in the rain burying the ash
I hear the older voice speaking fire behind the sky's wall
I have another ear at the tip of my dark one

II

Fear is unspooling down from the tongues of leaders
The president is human and steps out from his chair
And screams at not feeling the floor

Obsolete marine puppets are attaching themselves
To the thread in Georgia grass and Florida sand
Their only thought is Dream-Kill
They are crawling like starved lizards up Guantanamo Bay

Eyes are dropping into the tears of priest's hands
In all the heads of the world God waits with a needle of light

III

There is an unlit candle in the ear of a father
 A minister someone else
 In the hair of a wick there is a whole valley of life
 Waiting to rise out on the flame's cloud
 A whole sky is waiting to be shingled with light
 Ravened birds are eating through their own dust in this valley
 Black cows are eating black grass beneath the eclipsed moon
 The beauty of women is standing in their own shadows
 Darkness waits in all its different colors to be eyed

A child tries to step into the country of the third ear
 With a lit match
 But the weight of leaders the weight of intellects
 The weight of schools the weight of age
 Bury his feet into the grave he is living for
 His fingers burning into the page

—Dean Wiseman Golden



Drawing by Anne Johnson Leech

An Epiphany in Ireland

fiction by Ellen Jones

Sister Mary Anna's head was usually chock-full of selfless practical thoughts about the betterment of the school or about the salvation of the girl's souls. Sister Mary Anna never indulged in destructive thoughts. She was a disciplined thinker. She had in fact barred Satan from her thoughts years ago. This was accomplished only after much discipline and self-denial. "Evil thoughts lead to evil deeds," she often told the girls. As a novice Sister Mary Anna had subjected herself to intense periods of prayer and fasting. She had succeeded in extinguishing within herself many of the earthly desires that so brutally wear men down, but more importantly that distract them from spiritual matters. Sister Mary Anna was respected and admired by her fellow nuns and peers. Her unwavering faith and ardent devotion to the cause of salvation were impressive.

At the young age of thirty-two Sister Anna was appointed to the position of headmistress at Greystones Holy Convent school for girls. She and four other nuns ministered to the spiritual and educational needs of the young ladies in the small communities of Greystones and Bray. The sisters lived fastidiously in the three large rooms at the back of the church. The only source of heat was a fireplace in the kitchen. They burned peat for fuel because it was cheaper than coal. During the colder months the sisters' black garbs smelled strongly of peat. Potatoes, cabbage and fish were the mainstays of their diet. Because of frequent fast days and the expense the nuns abstained from eating meat. They divided such tasks as cooking and cleaning equally among themselves. Because Sister Mary Anna was able to serve God with all her heart and human abilities she felt happy and fulfilled in her work at the convent.

Sister Mary Anna's classes were the terror of the young

and older girls alike. She taught geography and mathematics. The girls were expected to be as precise and disciplined in their studies as in their spiritual lives. Sister Mary Anna gave the girls the wrath of God daily in the form of scoldings, lectures and wise words.

"Mora Hooley! Stand up, child. Now, why haven't you got your maths today?" droned Sister Anna's stern voice.

"Come, child. What have you got to say for yourself?"

Mora, a pretty freckled girl rose slowly and in a trembling voice responded "I, I, I don't know sister."

"You don't know? Sure an' it's because you didn't do them. Now who do you think you're hurtin' most? Me? No. Yourself? Again no. Your're hurtin' our sweet savior the Lord Jesus who loves you and cares more about you than anyone else in the whole world."

Mora's eyes filled with tears.

"Even more than me own mother?" she said.

"Even more than your own mother" replied Sister Mary Anna in a gentler tone of voice.

Large tears ran down Mora's rosy cheeks.

Sister Mary Anna added mercifully "Don't worry, Mora. Just try to do your studies from now on. Your daily tasks will be easier to accomplish if you keep our savior in mind."

The humiliation of Mora had been a learning experience for the whole class, Sister Mary thought to herself.

In retaliation to the persistent proselytizing, the impudent black-haired Deirdre had, before her eager classmates, dubbed Sister Mary Anna "the holy rain machine." The girls were ecstatic when Deirdre dared to make faces and bizarre gestures in imitation of the holy sister.

One afternoon the upright Mary Walpole, school mathematics genius, marched stalwartly into Sister Mary Anna's office.

"Sister, I'd like to report a misdeed." Sister Mary Anna looked approvingly at the obedient Mary Walpole. Mary's consistency and singleness of purpose were a constant source of joy to the nun.

"Mary, if you feel it your duty to tell me what you have seen, then by all means go ahead, child."

"I do, sister. Now, not more than fifteen minutes ago I was walking back to school. I had just eaten lunch with my parents. I stepped into the public toilet which is just across the way and down a bit from the school. And who do you think I discovered inside? It was Deirdre and Alice! They were lounging and leaning about on the sinks smoking cigarettes."

Sister Mary Anna called a general assembly immediately. The girls, neatly dressed in blue blazers and plaid skirts, filed by class into the assembly hall. Sister Mary Anna stood before them. An expression of stern sadness covered her pale face.

"Today, I was informed of a destructive act committed by two of our students. Two young ladies were caught smoking cigarettes. Two misguided souls brought up in good Catholic homes were ignorantly defiling their healthy young bodies. Your body is a temple of the holy spirit and should be treated with reverence. To think that one builds, slowly, day by day, a good moral character and strong faith in God only

to tear it down as quickly by absurd self-destruction. It breaks me heart."

Sister Mary Anna paused and gazed out with such intensity that many of the girls squirmed uncomfortably in their chairs. The silence in the room was tremendous. Relief came. Sister Mary Anna continued. "Seek the Lord and live. The lord has commanded us to do what is right and good in his eyes. He has given us his commandments and told us to inscribe them upon hearts. Don't allow yourselves to be taken in by Satan and his followers. Seek the Lord and live."

Sister Mary Anna had no more to say. She walked quickly out of the assembly hall. Her sermon had impressed the girls. They filed dumbly out of the hall feeling justly chastised and sharing in feelings of guilt.

One fine Saturday morning Sister Mary Anna dismissed herself from her usual duties. She told Sister Elizabeth that she felt need to walk by the seaside to meditate upon some matters. Sister Mary Anna chose to make the steep climb up Bray Head and then to descend down to the sea from the other side. It had been years since she and Father David had made the same climb up and down the celebrated landmark. She could remember the exhilaration she had experienced upon reaching the top of the head and then scrambling and falling all the way down to the sea. Inspired by the memory she began the long trek upward. The climb was difficult but she did not tire easily. After an hour or more of patient and careful climbing Sister Mary Anna found that she was nearing the top. She could see an arm of the huge stone cross that crowned the head. "Where but in holy Ireland could one find such a monument?" she thought. Sister Mary Anna pulled herself up onto the flatter surface of the head by way of several large roots which jutted out of what had become a horizontal wall of earth. She stood up. The view was more magnificent than she had remembered. The dark Irish sea stretched out into an infinity of space. Immense white clouds enriched the blue that met the green sea and then also stretched out into an infinity. Sister Mary Anna saw where the heavens meet the earth. She felt as though she had reached a frontier of human knowledge that no other before her had seen or realized. She was overwhelmed with emotion. The height made her dizzy. She supported herself against the massive stone cross. It felt hard and cold. She was frightened. As she looked out over the world the fear turned into terror. She tried to pray aloud but her voice quavered and no words came out. She stumbled forward. "I must get down. I must get down." She told herself. She moved toward the edge and looked down at the cruel but beautiful panorama. Huge grey boulders and pink and violet spreads of heather dove dangerously down to the sea. She was sweating. Her hands trembled. She lay flat, then swung her legs over and down. Her foot searched wildly for the boulder beneath but she descended too quickly. Her foot slipped.



In the darkness the beast scorns his chains,
Strains his sinews,
Gnashes fangs.
My heart perches shivering
On a thin ledge of light
While solitude looms huge
In the blackness of the room.

—Leslie A. Blackmon

Snakes and Flames

Outside the window
across the street
winding around the oak
a bright red vine
reached greedily skyward
toward the yellow treetop
like a snake devouring the sun.

—Grace Kane

The Last Laugh

I did put on a good show,
didn't I?
I left them frolicky, jovial, laughing,
Thinking good thoughts about me:
I think.
Perhaps they were putting on a
show too, a good show.

—Victoria Jackson

The mid-afternoon crisis
ended up on the table
with a knife in its gut.

The ten o'clock madness
has me fumbling around
with a phaser on overload.

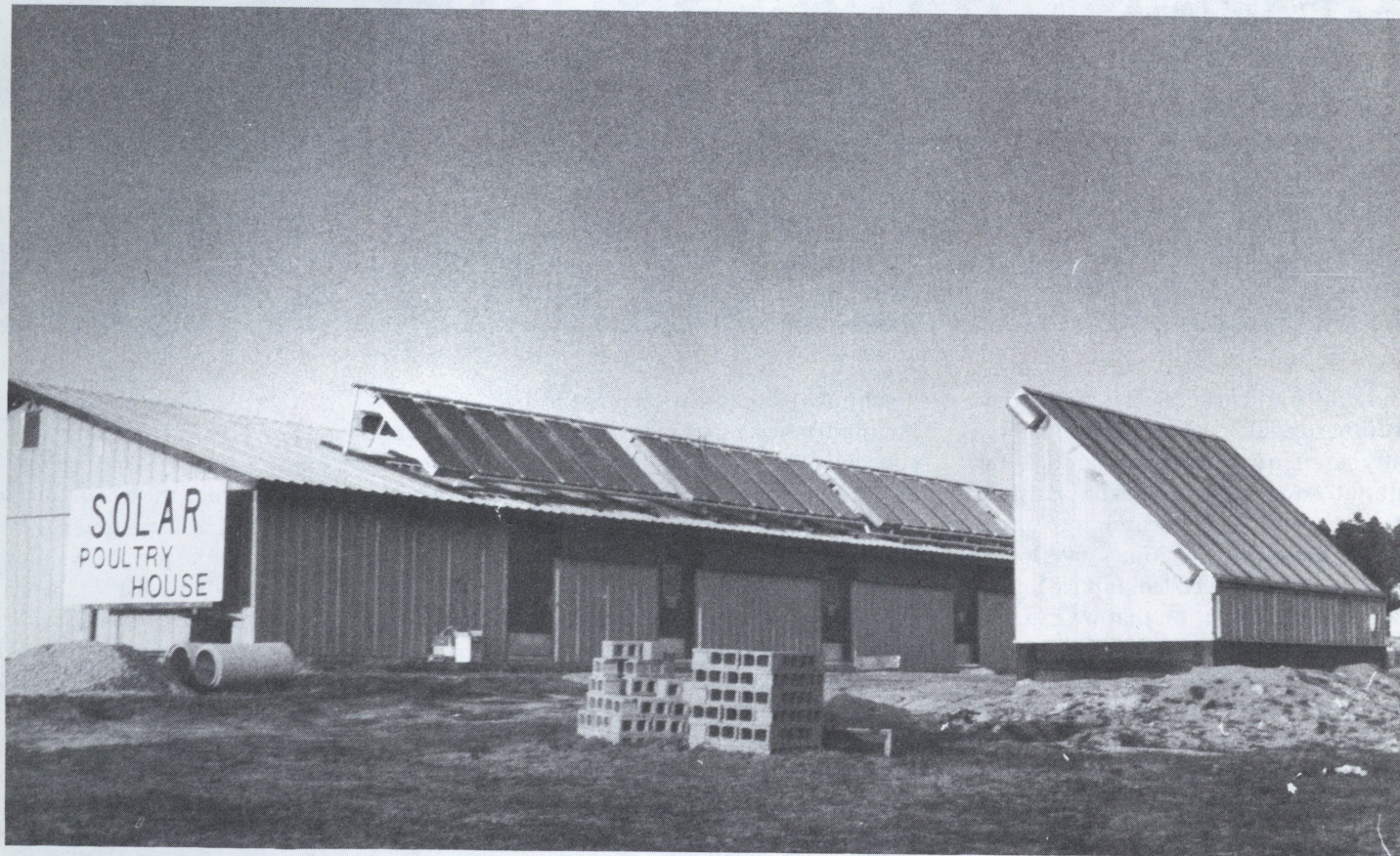
—Kathanne W. Greene



KEEPING THE HOME FIRES BURNING:

SOME AUBURN RESPONSES TO THE ENERGY CRISIS

By Robert Boliek, Jr.



Few problems facing the citizens of industrial nations today are as grave as the problems of energy management and development. This is a limited world, and many of the energy reserves we once considered inexhaustible are visibly drying up. These problems are of particular importance here in the United States, for though we make up only six per cent of the world's population, we consume about one third of the energy produced on earth. How we manage our resources and consumption is of prime importance, not only to us, but to all people, for we are by far the greatest consumers of energy on the planet. Whatever choices we make will have world-wide influence.

Perhaps the Arab oil embargo of several years ago best drove home the point for many. Suddenly, gas was no longer plentiful, and the United States faced the possibility of a winter with no heating oil. People everywhere began to ask serious questions about energy management in this country, and the worldwide nature of the problem was made clear.

We still have no comprehensive energy program for the country, though the problems of energy management have been recognized as important enough to rate the creation of a cabinet level agency, the Department of Energy, to deal with them. An important function of the DOE is to direct funds into energy

research, research that is vital in a world rapidly depleting its energy reserves.

The DOE, the Alabama Energy Management Board, and various corporations such as Alabama Power and Union Carbide fund a great deal of the energy research here at Auburn. In the first five months of the fiscal year 1979, these grants totaled nearly 2.5 million dollars for 19 different projects. These particular projects ranged from coal research to conservation awareness programs and originated in departments as diverse as mechanical engineering and political science. Furthermore, they represent only a fraction of the energy research presently underway or in the planning stage here at Auburn.

Photographs by Rob Lotufo



In the world of energy research, where fusion specialists work with high intensity lasers or the solar researchers talk about powering a world on sunshine, the importance of research into energy conservation is sometimes overlooked by the glamour-dazzled public. Yet it is through conservation that we can most immediately attack the energy crisis. Dr. Evangelos Biblis, of the Department of Forestry, has designed a project which he hopes will evaluate the energy efficiency of various building techniques. Twelve experimental housing units, or "cells", were constructed using different building methods common to the construction industry. The cells were carefully built in such a way that they would differ from one another by only one factor. One cell, for instance, might use plywood siding as opposed to brick. The inside temperature of each cell is kept at a constant 68° in the winter and 76° in the summer. "The effect of each factor . . . will be determined directly by comparing the energy required by two housing units that are identical in every respect except by one factor," according to Dr. Biblis. Data-taking was initiated in January of this year, and the measurements will be taken for one complete year. Already though, significant differences in the energy efficiency of the various units have emerged.

Although conservation is of the highest importance and projects like the one conceived by Dr. Biblis are extremely valuable, the development of new energy sources and technologies is absolutely vital for the future. One of the most interesting ideas presently being developed by Auburn researchers is the conversion of biomass into alcohol. Biomass is a catchall word for organic matter. The biomass to be used in these processes contains cellulose. Auburn researchers, in conjunction with the University of Alabama in Huntsville, have proposed a vast program which, if successful, might result in the implementation of a new alcohol industry in Alabama.

The proposal is a wholly integrated one which will include research into all facets of alcohol production from biomass. Though it has not yet been funded, researchers have been gathered from the Departments of Agronomy and Soils, Agriculture, Chemical, Mechanical and Textile Engineering, as well as Animal and Dairy Science. These researchers are hoping to cover the whole spectrum of biomass conversion. One group of them, for instance, would investigate the various crops that might be used, while, at the opposite end of the process, another group would investigate the engine performance of the final pro-

duct—alcohol. In between, people would be at work on the harvesting machinery which would be needed, or study the ways in which the by-products of the process could be used, and so on. A report describing the proposal states that "the potential exists for Alabama to supply more than 50% of its liquid fuel needs from Alabama-grown renewable resources," if such a program were initiated on a large scale.

One of the key features of the program is that it does involve *renewable* resources. We would not be depleting a finite resource such as coal or oil if we implemented it. Furthermore, the biomass to be converted could easily be grown on land which would not readily support production of food crops. Dr. Paul K. Turnquist, head of the Department of Agricultural Engineering and one of the leaders of the project, is optimistic about its possibilities. "I think we've put together a strong proposal—it will be a benefit both to the state and the nation."

Compared with the work Auburn has begun in biomass conversion, the amount of work done with solar energy is scanty. The difference probably lies within the nature of solar energy itself. At its present stage of

development, it simply does not readily lend itself to huge research teams working towards a new, highly centralized industry, the sort of research that usually lands the big corporate and government grants. A solar heating unit, for example, must be more or less tailor-made for the structure it is meant to serve; it is by nature a decentralizing influence. It can also be expensive. Though such a unit may save energy and money in the long run, few people are willing to make the large initial investment required for the unit's installation.

Nevertheless, some interesting work had been carried out at Auburn, work that demonstrates the feasibility of solar energy at least in one industry. Dr. R. N. Brewer of the Department of Poultry Science, along with members of the Departments of Mechanical Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, and others have developed an experimental, solar heated poultry house. A leaflet describing the operation prepared by Dr. Brewer and Dr. C. A. Flood, of the Department of Agricultural Engineering, explains that the "predicted short supplies" of fossil fuels had "pointed up the need for the development of alternate energy sources," particularly for the poultry industry which is highly

years for the system to pay for itself. The question is whether the system will last that long, though Dr. Brewer pointed out that "we've been out there three and a half or four years. So far, it (the poultry house) shows no sign of wear. We feel like it's been a good program." He furthermore feels that if for some reason the poultry industry in Alabama had to convert to solar energy tomorrow, it could be done.

Of course, Auburn's energy research program is hardly limited to these projects. A complete list would be a lengthy one indeed. According to James A. Guin of the chemical engineering department, for instance, as quoted in a recent *Plainsman* article, "Auburn is one of the biggest universities in coal research in the United States." There is some fusion research here as well, among many other possible examples.

Perhaps equal in importance to the hard data that results from this research, however, is an understanding of public attitude towards energy. Dr. Marllin Simon of the physics department and Dr. W. D. Perry of the chemistry department have been involved for several

years with a public awareness program that visibly demonstrates the problems of energy management. They use an analog computer which may be programmed to represent our society's energy use. Audiences can adjust many different factors; consumption of resources, development of new technology, and environmental impact are examples. The object is to see how long the world will survive using any particular audience's energy plan. People learn several things from this experience, according to Dr. Simon. They learn, for instance, that a stable population is desirable and that even modest conservation measures will result in big gains. Depending on the audience, Dr. Simon said, "some will use coal heavily, some fission, others a combination." He also finds a definite difference in philosophy between children and adults. "Young people seem more willing to invest in what may be 30 years down the pipeline, and are more careful with nuclear energy" than their older counterparts. Whatever their persuasion, the simulator generally gives them a hard time of it; the problems are that grave.



Considering the Crisis in Iran, I Confront the Season

Winter, too, holds hostages.
Snow and cold conspire to halt all motion,
fog breath blue with wanting summer.

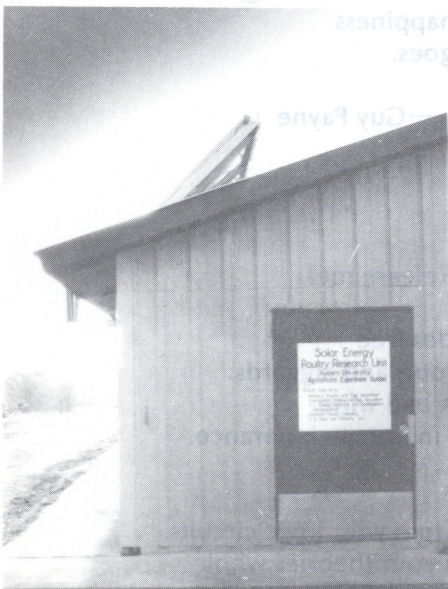
And who can survive on the rumor
that each slight flake has a beauty unduplicated
when drifts block the path that leads home?

We hoard a reservoir of split kindling,
backlogs to last the night. We hold tight
to the dream of a unique face and bank the blaze.

Hope upholds us, despair withheld by light
from a fire built in better times.
Even the widow still trusts the sky.

Even the orphan recalls the clean sun.
We sleep and dream of freedom.
At dawn, one lone ember stars the hearth.

—R.T. Smith



dependent of fossil fuels. According to Dr. Brewer, "the unit works very well technically." The problems reside in economics. It will take fifteen to twenty

last autumn of the decade

somewhere a black man is scooping
the dry gloves of summer
into a cardboard box.

on the veranda someone's mother
whistles "in the mood,"
a song she remembers

even now. soon we'll have to cover
the windows with plastic
and i'll be playing pagannini

just to keep warm. meanwhile
the cat's asleep
on the closet shelf.

so the curvature of time and space
has rolled me this far,
as close to you

as if i had borrowed a map
in the nick of time.
down the street

the old man gums his harmonica,
ignorant of the signal fires
in the night sky.

—A.J. Wright

Link

Breathing smoke of consumed martyrs
Treading tombs of parents past,
We are drops of flowing rivers,
Relay runners to the last.

We are blooms of roots before us,
We, the hopes of all who died;
We are roots of blooms beyond us,
We the future must decide.

Others rest upon our shoulders,
We on others rest besides;
We are players in a concert
Where the human spirit hides.

—Dan Haulman

Limerick Contest Winner: Mike Hopf

There was a young man from 'round Tallassee
Who had only one major fallacy
When Fleahop, his home,
was made fun of, he'd foam
and say "You jest talks out of jallassy."

Maneater

The cold-blooded she-creature
Slices through the water,
Her white belly flashing,
Her white teeth slashing,
Devouring happiness
As she goes.

—Guy Payne

Senioritis

Academia! Release me!

Let me wander free
among the fools and laggards.
Let me drink bad wine
and partake in human ignorance.

Please,
unplug me from your logic circuits.
I have eaten your theories whole
and drunk your bitter cries for
freedom.

—Kathanne W. Greene

by Curt LeVan

C. L. Torbett is touted as being one of the top five restaurants in the Chattahoochee Valley and in many ways it probably is. Situated in a small house on the Opelika Highway, its atmosphere is heavy on wood and plants. Personally, I'm a sucker for wood and hanging plants.

The menu is long and varied, ranging from sandwiches and omelettes to steaks and seafood. One of the specialties is spaghetti with a sauce that has been simmered for two days. Many of the selections are served with an excellent wild rice or with what they call "tater fries" — huge french fries made from about one-eighth of a potato. The food is generally very good. Chicken, soups, hamburgers, and salads are also available.

My most frequent complaint with restaurants is their service. Torbett's waiters are efficient but also tend to be indifferent. I like to be served by someone who really enjoys his work, not one who just waits on tables for a living. Still, the service is above average for the Auburn area.

The wine room, although limited, is quite good for East Alabama. They have several excellent wines and it's nice

to have a place with a pleasant atmosphere where you can make your selection.

Perhaps Torbett's only real shortcoming is its size. A year or so ago they reorganized the interior, adding the wine room in the process, and the dining area is quite small. Be prepared to wait a while if you decide to eat out on the same night everyone else in town does.

Apparently they are trying to change their image. The menu now sports a large Confederate soldier and uses such "Southernized" spellings as Uhmerkin (American) and Aigs (eggs). It looks as though it were ripped off from a Yankee tourist trap along I-75 on the way to Florida. True Southerners may be insulted by this image.

Prices at Torbett's are reasonable although \$5.50 for hamburger steak gives me unpleasant memories of War Eagle Cafeteria. Two can eat here for about \$15 - \$20.

I have only two suggestions for Torbett's management. First, try to find some way to have a larger dining area without ruining the cozy atmosphere which is traditionally Torbett's. And second, get rid of that ridiculous menu.



Drawing by Lynne Welles

FENTON FARNSWORTH

Probes his emotions!

by Bill Holbrook

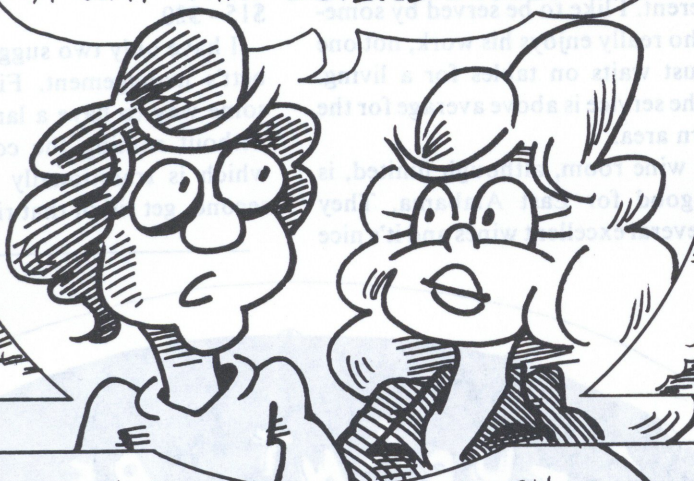
FENTON, NOW THAT I'M SERIOUSLY DATING WAYNE, I THINK IT'S TIME TO ASSESS OUR RELATIONSHIP!



WE'VE BEEN **BEST FRIENDS** FOR YEARS, BUT NOW I'VE GOT TO KNOW **EXACTLY** HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT ME... I MEAN, YOU AREN'T IN **LOVE** WITH ME, ARE YOU?



NO, MY FEELINGS TOWARD YOU ARE **DEEPER** THAN THAT! I CAN **TALK** WITH YOU, **SHARE** MY PROBLEMS WITH YOU, AND **BARE MY SOUL** TO YOU IN A WAY THAT **LOVERS** COULDN'T!



WITH A **PHYSICAL** RELATIONSHIP, A CERTAIN **TACT** IS REQUIRED; YOU SOMETIMES HAVE TO KEEP **SECRETS** FROM YOUR PARTNER!



THAT'S WHY IT'S **BEST** THAT WE KEEP OUR FRIENDSHIP **PLATONIC**! I **ALWAYS** WANT US TO BE ABLE TO BE **TOTALLY OPEN** WITH EACH OTHER!



GOSH... THAT'S A **VERY** PERSUASIVE STATEMENT, FENTON!



YES, I TELL MYSELF THAT AT LEAST THREE TIMES A DAY!





Darkling

"Here rumors of treasure enticed me,
As you, Coric, knew that they would,
And so, in your lair you ensnared me,
At a time when I thought nothing could.
Through magic and monsters I'd quested;
Through death and enchantments I'd won;
And then, at the moment of glory,
I was, by your dark arts, undone.
Yes laugh, Coric, now that you have me;
While your slaves check the chains that I bear;
For when I win loose I will kill you,
And I say to you, 'Warlock, beware!'
Ah, yes, I remember your taunting.
I was 'but a gnat' so you said.
Well, look to your spell, black magician,
For all wizards don't die when they're dead.
Ha! That one struck deeply, eh, Coric?
You hadn't considered *that* thought;
That my powers, in death, might stay with me,
And that Coric himself could be caught!
Yes, I think...oh, the irons are ready,
And the imps would begin. Just as well.
I suggest that you start running, Coric,
For quite soon I will see you in Hell."

—Catherine DeMott

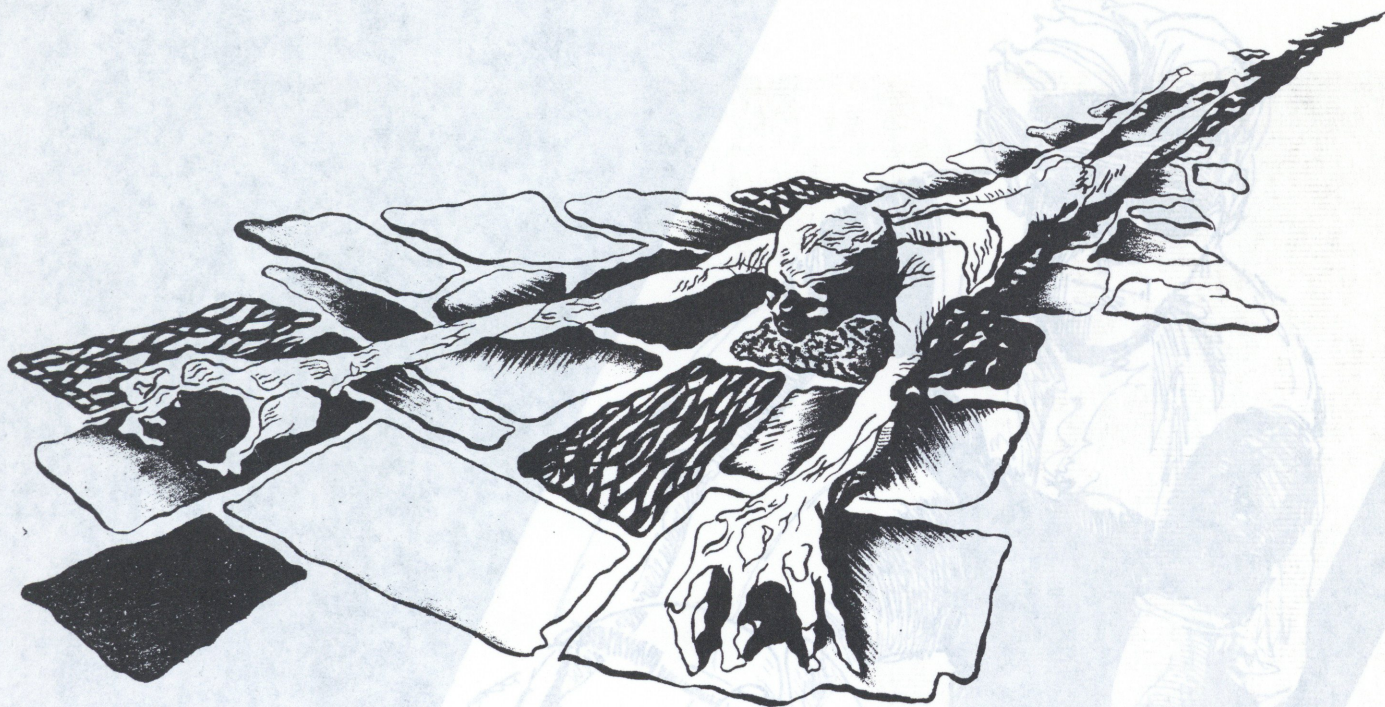
He is old —
He has always been old.
And has lived under floorboards.
And has spoken to me through the outer cellar door.
And has said that plants can understand.
And has spoken from the highest trees the whisperings of mysteries
Known only to the fairies with swirling, golden hair.
And has spoken of pine needles that make the softest beds.
And has revealed that butterflies have parlors,
And pianos,
And say their prayers before they sleep.
And he has visited photographs,
And has travelled roads in dreams.

—Leslie A. Blackmon





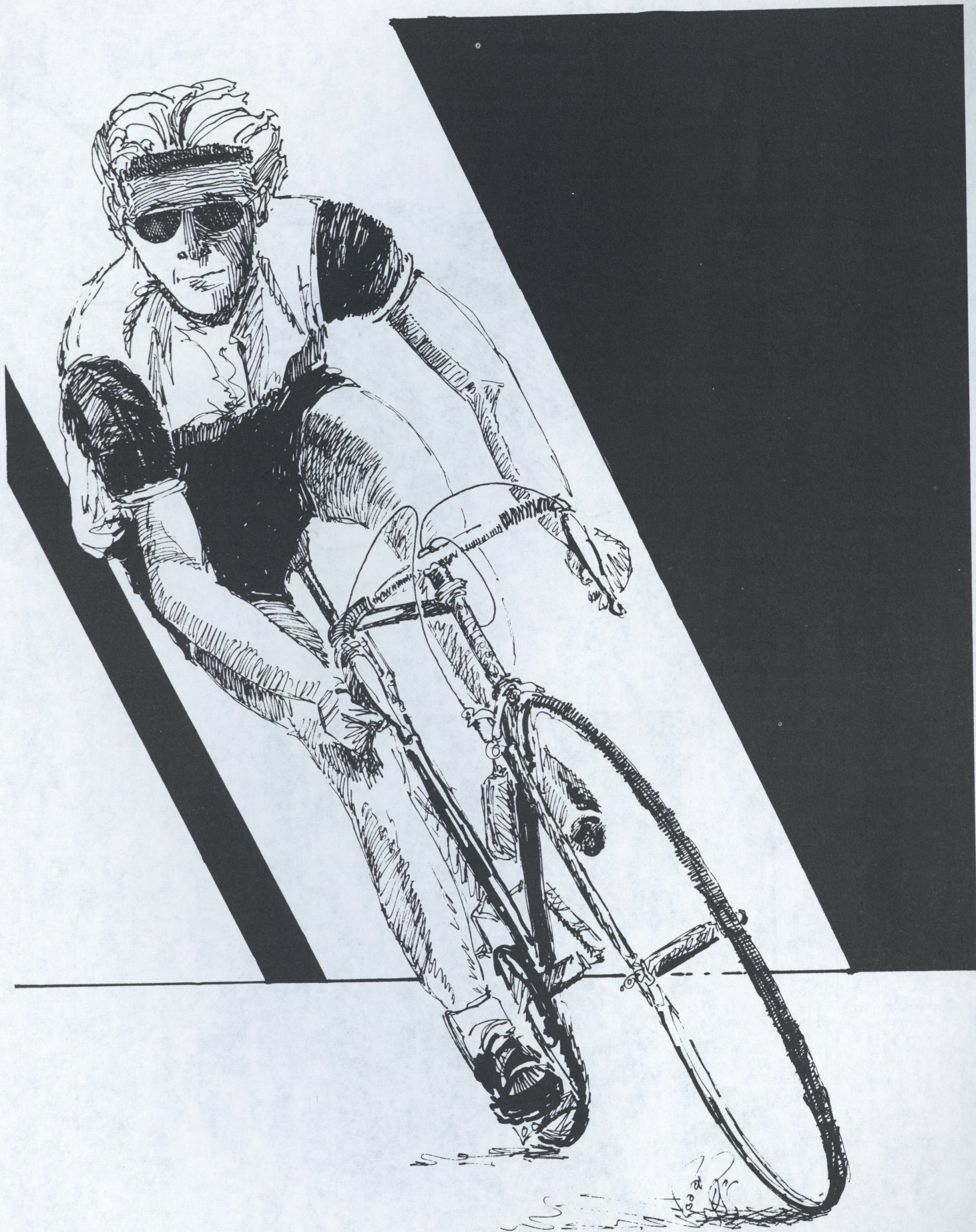
Drawing by Elizabeth Downing



Lithograph by Jonathan McCarver



Drawing by William Mitchell



The Rider

fiction by William Dinwiddie

The young man stepped out of the front door, fumbled for a minute with the keys in his pocket and then moved off the porch to the shaded side of the house where his bicycle leaned. He regarded its rusty chain and flaccid cracking tires and returned inside for a hand pump and a can of his wife's sewing machine oil. He squirted oil along the chain and in every likely orifice in the back sprocket. While inflating the tires he briefly worried about their dependability, and then he became irritated at his awkwardness in removing the screw pump connection from the air valve. He allowed so much air to escape that he had to repeat the process. Satisfied at last, he put the oil and the pump on the porch, tied a string around his pants leg, and pedalled down the bumpy brick drive and onto the street.

The sun was a gift in the middle of an otherwise rainy February, but no one else was out on this street except for an old man who unsmilingly washed his Chevrolet. The cyclist coasting past started to wave, but hesitated, and seeing no welcoming attitude in the old fellow, turned his eyes away. Coming to a busy street, he negotiated the crossing carefully, waiting until no cars approached from either direction, not wanting to take a chance on his unfamiliar vehicle.

The young man's name was John Henderson, a name common enough to avoid ridicule in grammar school, something for which he had always mentally thanked his parents. He was now a senior medical student at a respected Southern university. He would graduate this spring and had been accepted to a surgical residency in a large California hospital. He was married to a chubby, jolly woman who loved to cook and to give parties and to play with children but who was also sensitive to his occasional moodiness. And so this morning she remained in bed watching late Saturday cartoons, allowing him the solitary ride on his seldom used bicycle.

The medical student was full of thoughts about his future. He worried about his commitment to become a surgeon—did he want to give up five more years of his short life before he could begin his own practice? He could do a general residency instead and be out in two years. Recently he had noticed within himself the same tendencies apparent in his now almost senile father, who had shown progressively less interest in things as he had aged. The medical student was concerned that he himself would be like his father, and he doubted whether as a doctor he would have the energy to enjoy a continuously busy schedule. He didn't want his occupation to become slogging drudgery, using up futilely his remaining virile years. He also knew that since adoles-

cence his interests had been only passing fancies, stimulated initially by friends' enthusiasm and kept alive by his own competitiveness. He had done well in college, primarily because of this competitive spirit, but in medical school, when not only rivalry but also love for the subject was required, he had not excelled. His ego had adjusted, but sometimes he felt lost, compared to the real students, the ones with fire in their eyes. Worst of all he realized that he could never quit medicine because he felt he ought to provide well for his wife, because of the expectations of his family and friends, and because he knew he couldn't live with the stigma of failure.

On the other side of the busy street, the road sloped gradually upward, and the neighborhood became poorer. The incline made him breathe harder, and he made a mental note to exercise more; but with practiced cynicism he knew that he would never overcome the other demands on his time to begin an organized regimen. The cracks in the road bumped him annoyingly, and his mood was not improved when a group of black children called out to him with what he imagined to be derision. A dog ran along side threateningly, but he stabbed at its head with his foot, hitting the dog but almost losing his balance in the maneuver. When he recovered, he realized with relief that the dog had lost interest in him.

Almost at the top of the hill was a brown and stubby field which had growing in it a few bare pecan trees cloaked at their bases with jumbles of vines. Taking the opportunity to rest he leaned his bicycle against a tree and sat himself on the ground. He looked at the things around him: the blackbirds in the field, pecking and walking, the clotheslines in the backyards, the rows of frost-killed vegetables, the row-houses with sides of white asbestos shingles. He wondered about the people who lived in those houses, how they managed to provide happiness and direction for themselves and whether they were any better at those activities than he was.

Across the field he noticed an elementary school, and thinking that he could get a drink of water there, he chained his bicycle and set out walking. Coming nearer to the blackbirds he was seized with a sudden impulse and ran madly at them, shouting what he imagined to be a rebel yell. In delight he watched their panicked, flurried swarming.

In the school yard he drank from a spigot extending from a wall. Peering into the darkened rooms he had a weird sense of the passage of time, seeing how little the desks were and remembering his awful shyness in the first grade—both of these things, desks and shyness, now outgrown, almost without his realizing their passage.

A slim black youth was in the school yard, lackadaisically hitting a tetherball, and the man watched him for a while, recalling his own former proficiency in the game. Once when he was 10 years old, he had beaten the high school football coach, a big man of 30, in a fair match. Now, although feeling a little foolish, John Henderson approached the boy and asked if he would play a game. The youth nodded seriously and hit the ball, beginning to wind it around and around the center pole. The man's height, however, helped him, and as the spiral descended, he hit the ball in turn and

began to unwind the rope and loop it around in his direction. Back and forth they played—the boy having more skill and the man having greater strength. The man's endurance, however, was the deciding factor and at last he had the entire length of rope wrapped at the top of the pole. Exhausted but with dignity the boy congratulated him. They talked for a few minutes about sports and schools, and then the boy left, trotting across the field in the sunlight toward one of the silent row-houses. The medical student lingered for a while longer, scuffling through the loose sand and the playground detritus of chewing gum wrappers and popsicle sticks. He hit the ball a few more times, feeling the power in his arm, and then he abruptly left also. The blackbirds were all gone, and his bicycle was still where he had locked it. He felt good, somehow rejuvenated; he thought maybe it was because he still retained his old ability. He remembered that his father had never played tetherball.

On the street again he rode with new energy back the way he had come. Downhill he whizzed—past the children playing in front yards, past barking dogs and old men sleeping on their porches. His mind was completely free of thoughts about his problems; he was aware only of the wind rushing past, of the scenery along the street, and of the physical sensations of sitting astride the bicycle and working its pedals. He came to the busy intersection and hesitated for a moment, braking only partially. He was still moving at a fair clip, and he still possessed his good feeling. Cars moved both ways on the cross street, but he automatically assessed their pattern of motion and in a gambling moment darted across safely. His risk and success filled him with a sort of jubila-

tion, and he felt special and powerful.

The med student continued to ride homeward, admiring along the way a pair of tall old cedars that grew not far from his house. In his reverie of appreciation a car passed him closely, forcing him to ride nearer to the edge of the street. After the car moved ahead, the cyclist tried to turn back on to the blacktop, out of the gutter, and as he did so, the lip of asphalt caught his wheel and flipped him off balance and onto the pavement with a jolt and a skid and a clatter of metal.

He lay stunned for several moments, and then feeling foolish, rose to his feet uncertainly, looking around about him. Much shaken, and with his palms bleeding and his knees hurting to the inner bone, he limped slowly across the street, pulling his damaged bicycle. He laid it in the front yard and walked up the steps and into his house. His wife had gone out, and no one responded to his call; the silence, punctuated with the sound of his steps in the empty rooms, made the house seem to him depressingly lonely. He walked to the bathroom and cleaned his scrapes with fussy, serious attention, bearing the sting as if it was a tired habit. Then he got a beer from the refrigerator and returned to the front porch to drink it. As he sat there with his physical hurts and his shrunken confidence, he thought how incapable he was of pursuing tenaciously the things he wanted. The unbent wheel on his bicycle still revolved slowly, and he watched it as it coasted around and around with its energy diminishing. He saw the wheel stop, move backward and then forward, then backward, and then finally come to rest, motionless in the early afternoon.



My Mother's Garden

I should have gone out west;
to L.A. or Chicago;
walked streets fronting on the bay
or sat by rinsed shores,
blanched on the salted skies.

But encumbered by the meshed herbs
or stranded by a red hour,
the bitterest sweet clumps of rhubarb,
I stayed. In the drenched margins
of a convexed, interior year.

—Carl Dockery

Timber Wolves

Sinister; gray-black timber wolves running in a tight pack,
a sudden kill; they gorge themselves;
silent grey ghosts filter away into the pines.

—Grace Kane

apothecosis

i am slowly turning into myself.

the feet of stone
that have anchored me here so long
are yielding.

the hands of steel—hooks, really—
that have measured everything
are widening.

the brittle spheres of glass
slowly soften in their sockets.

before sundown
i may walk with a stride
and talk in a tone
unknown before.

i am slowly turning into myself.

—A.J. Wright



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